

لماذا من الأصل

**JOHN WALSH
MIDLIFE CRISIS OF
A PUNK ICON**



THE MAGAZINE

**HOLIDAY HEAVEN
THE BEST PLACES
TO CHILL OUT**

TIME OFF

**GIRL TROUBLE
GI JANE GETS HER
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THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Saturday 9 May 1998 70p (IR 70p) No 3,606 *

Minister rocked by mercenaries' revelations

By Fran Abrams and Andrew Buncombe

THE Foreign Office minister Tony Lloyd was under increasing pressure last night as new revelations pointed to an embarrassingly close relationship between officials and mercenaries who ousted the regime in the African state of Sierra Leone.

Mr Lloyd was forced to admit that there were "points to correct" in information he had given to a Commons select committee earlier this week, when he said he had only recently been told that a investigation into the matter had been launched.

He admitted yesterday that the matter had been passed to him "for looking" but he failed to notice it.

Mr Lloyd's admission came as solicitors acting for Sandline International released a letter which claimed they had liaised very closely with senior British officials over their operation to help reinstate the ousted president of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

Sandline, which is headed by former army officer Lt-Col Tim Spicer, is under investigation by Customs and Excise for alleged breaches of a United Nations arms embargo, but has insisted it was acting with government approval.

The company released a "strictly private" letter, sent to Robin Cook on 24 April, claiming the Foreign Secretary had breached its confidential nature when he referred to it in the Commons on 6 May.

The Independent revealed earlier

this week that Sandline had a series of meetings with Foreign Office officials just weeks before it arranged a shipment of arms to Sierra Leone, to help President Kabbah, who was ousted last May in a coup led by Johnny Paul Koroma. It was also revealed last week that officers from HM Customs and Excise had launched an investigation into whether the shipment had broken UN and EU embargoes, and the possible role of British officials.

Inside
How mercenaries met Foreign Office officials, page 2
Leading article, page 16

The letter claims that Sandline met with up to four named officials from the Foreign Office. It also claims that it carried out similar briefings with US officials as well as senior military officers in west Africa.

Sandline said it had been recommended to President Kabbah by his friend Peter Penfold, the High Commissioner to Sierra Leone. Mr Penfold is due to be questioned by Customs officers.

While there is no evidence that ministers knew about Sandline's operation or of their contact with officials, the affair is becoming increasingly embarrassing for the Government - suggesting as it does, a failure of communication within the Foreign Office. Mr Lloyd told a Com-

mmons select committee on Tuesday that he did not know of a Customs investigation into the shipping of arms to Mr Kabbah's soldiers until last Friday. Mr Cook told the Commons the following day that Mr Lloyd had been given the information "for noting" two weeks earlier.

Although there is no suggestion that Mr Lloyd deliberately misled the committee, Tory MPs said last night that he had failed to apologise and would have to go. The most likely explanation was that his officials failed to draw the matter to his attention and he did not read his briefs properly.

David Wilshire, one of the MPs whose question about the Sandline affair floored Mr Lloyd when he appeared before the committee, has formally asked for him to be recalled. He said yesterday's statement was "a pathetic little apology" and was not good enough.

"Someone's going to have to be the fall guy and resign," he said.

In a letter to Donald Anderson, chairman of the committee, Mr Lloyd said he had nothing to add to what the Foreign Secretary had said. "When I returned to the office and checked all the papers I discovered that there were, indeed, points to correct. I discussed these with Robin Cook and particularly asked him to set the record straight," he said.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said Mr Blair had every confidence in Mr Lloyd. Senior aides at the Foreign Office also maintained that he would not be forced to resign.

Hot water: 'The Burning Man' towers over 75 brave souls in the Devil's Pulpit who opted to wade the river gorge in a performance of 'The Secret Sign' by the Glasgow-based iwa. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid



Doctor on the run after nurse shot dead

By Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

A NATION-WIDE hunt was under way last night for a doctor, described as armed and dangerous, who went on the run after his girlfriend was shot in a pub car-park.

Thomas Shanks, 47, is wanted for questioning about the killing of Vicki Fletcher, a nurse, who was attacked in Castleford, West Yorkshire, on Thursday by a gunman. The anaesthetist - who was awarded a medal for an act of heroism while with the SAS during the 1970s guerrilla war in Yemen, according to a former member of the unit - worked at the same hospital as Ms Fletcher, who was 21, and with whom he was described as having a fiery relationship.

Police closed a school where Dr Shanks's ex-wife, Julie, works, and took she and her daughter into police protection. Dr Shanks phoned his former wife on Thursday. He and Ms Fletcher worked at Pockefract General Infirmary, where the nurse died of wounds to her back, arms and legs early yesterday.

She was with friends in Castlefield's pub before the attack. Stephen Thackray, manager, said she saw the gunman's face at the window and went out to see him.

"Shots were firing everywhere ... the firing went on, then we saw the man casually walk back to his car, get into it and calmly drive away. We ... just tried to stop the bleeding; there was nothing else we could do but wait for the ambulance."

Ms Fletcher, trying to flee, scaled metal railings and was heading back to the pub entrance when the man fired a second burst, leaving her dying on the ground. There were reports of a row at a pub in which the doctor may have been involved the night before the shooting.

Quiet drink, page 5

Lawrence murder corruption claim

By Kathy Marks

THE investigation into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence was obstructed by links between a Metropolitan Police officer and a notorious south London criminal whose son was a suspect, it was alleged yesterday.

Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for the Lawrence family, told the public inquiry into Stephen's death that this was the inference to be drawn from the failure by detectives to act on early tips-offs about the identity of the killers.

The inquiry was abruptly adjourned yesterday to permit the highest-ranking officers in the case to consult their

lawyers, after Mr Mansfield indicated that he planned to raise the possibility of a conspiracy among them to subvert the murder investigation. It will not now sit again until Wednesday.

The allegations of corruption came during questioning of Detective Sergeant Christopher Crowley, who discredited vital identification evidence, leading to the collapse of a private prosecution brought by Stephen's parents, Neville and Doreen.

They revolve around Clifford Norris, father of David Norris, one of five youths charged with killing Stephen. The inquiry has heard that Norris was a dangerous criminal who was known to buy off witnesses and jurors

and, according to rumour, police officers.

David Norris was one name repeatedly mentioned by police informants soon after Stephen was stabbed to death in Eltham, south London, by a white gang in 1993. Others included Neil and Jamie Acourt, whose three uncles, from a family called Stewart, were criminal associates of Clifford Norris. Despite the deluge of tips provided by detectives, no arrests were made for two weeks.

Mr Mansfield said he was not suggesting that DS Crowley had connections to the Norris family. "What we do infer from the circumstances of this case, given the way in which the intelligence was out

used in the early days, is that an officer, somewhere, must have known the Norrises," he said.

"The Norris family is capable of corruption, and that is beyond dispute. There must have been a connection with a police officer. It is not known which, since very few files, including this officer's, have been made available.

"The fact is that this was one of the best-known names, and it was not researched in the early days. And from the Norris family to the Stewarts to the Acourts there would have been a very strong inclination to protect the Acourts."

DS Crowley, who escorted the main prosecution witness to an identification parade but was

not on the murder inquiry team, said that he had "no knowledge" of corrupt links.

"Do you know a DS Coles on the Flying Squad?" asked Mr Mansfield. "I've never heard of him," he replied.

He said he knew very few of the detectives who investigated the murder - in contrast, Mr Mansfield pointed out, to his assertion at the committee proceedings that "I know most of the officers, possibly, in the whole inquiry team."

Mr Mansfield said that Clifford Norris, who is now serving eight years for drug and firearms offences, was at one time "wanted for a murder, but the murder was dropped because witnesses had been intimidated".

CHILDREN IN SUDAN ARE DYING

She is exhausted and starving, but she's walked all day to bring her grandchild to a relief centre. She may be too late.

Civil war and drought have brought thousands of children to the brink of death in Sudan.

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Picture: CHAN

unicef

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Beatles win historic ban on bootleg CD

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

IT WAS the "crummiest" recording ever to be associated with The Beatles. It brought the volatile George Harrison into courtroom in high dudgeon and it resulted yesterday in a landmark victory for musicians.

The former Beatles have won their High Court case to stop a CD produced from a 36-year-old tape of the band being released.

The Judge paid particular tribute to George Harrison, who had told the court that the recording was the "crummiest"



Harrison: Tape was the 'crummiest' recording ever

ever made in the group's name and then went on to reminisce about the earliest days of the world's most famous group.

Harrison's evidence in the case transcended the legal battle and will be a delight for Beatles historians. The 34-year-old, making a rare appearance and donning reading spectacles to pore over documents, was also unusually forthcoming about the group's early days, describing the seedy, drunken scenes in the Hamburg club where they were then performing, and even digressing to talk about his teenage days with John Lennon.

Yesterday, Mr Justice Neutral gave a short ruling after a settlement of the four-day hearing. Lingsong Music Ltd, which had claimed it had the rights to exploit the tape, had

whose leader, Edward Taylor, used his own reel-to-reel machine to record the bands on stage.

"One drunken person recording another bunch of drunks does not constitute business deals," Harrison told the judge. He added: "The only person who allegedly heard anything about it is the one person who is dead, who can't ... say it's a load of rubbish."

The judge ordered that all copies of the recording be delivered up to the Beatles' solicitors and that the group should be paid their legal costs and damages to be assessed at an inquiry. Musical discord, page 3

IN TOMORROW'S
INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY

Mercenaries met with four officials from the FO

**By Andrew Buncombe
and Andrew Marshall, in Washington**

■ Why I hate America: John Carlin, our man in Washington, delivers his devastating farewell to the USA

■ Festival folk
A who's who
of Cannes

■ Up here from Down Under: The girls from Oz with balls as well as beauty

■ The extended family reborn: Meet my friends, relations, offspring, au pair, lodger, and next-door- neighbours

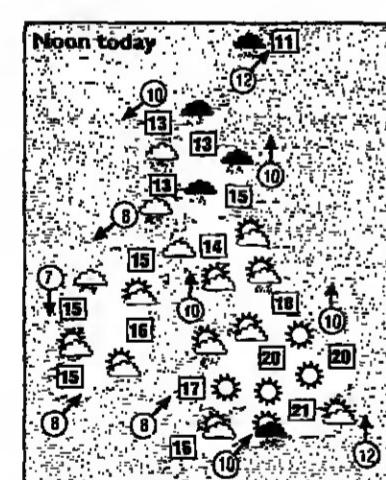
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| TV & radio | This Eve |



**Recycled paper made up
41.4% of the raw material for
UK newspapers in the
first half of 1997.**

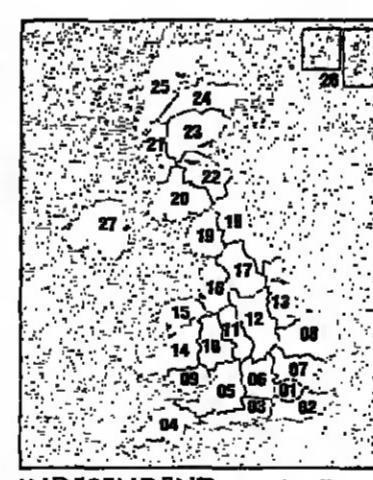
WEATHER



A band of rain will be slowly moving north across Scotland and N. Ireland, but the rain will peter out in southern Scotland and most parts of N. Ireland in the afternoon with a little sunshine coming through. England and Wales will have a warm, humid and sunny day but cloud will build during the afternoon with localised thunder downpours. Central and southern England are at greatest risk of seeing a thunderstorm in the late afternoon and evening.



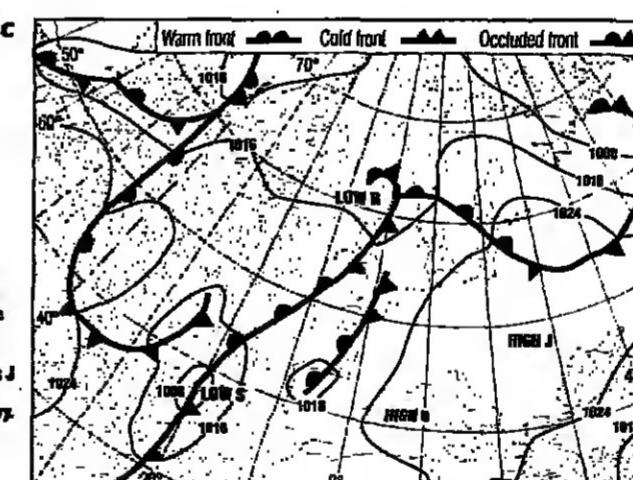
| <i>Homeport</i> | <i>Passenger</i> | <i>Destination</i> | <i>Crew</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Barnstaple | C 15 59 | Leeds | C 227 |
| Brighton | S 16 61 | Manchester | C 176 |
| Bristol | C 19 66 | Newcastle | C 125 |
| Cardiff | F 15 59 | Oxford | C 186 |
| Carlisle | C 10 50 | Plymouth | C 176 |
| Dover | F 20 68 | Scarborough | F 145 |
| Dublin | Dr 10 50 | Southampton | C 176 |
| Edinburgh | C 14 57 | Southend | S 196 |
| Exeter | F 15 59 | Stornoway | S 11 5 |
| Glasgow | C 12 54 | Tyne | C 166 |



INDEPENDENT Weatherline
For the latest forecasts dial 0891 5009 followed by the two digits for your area indicated by the above map. Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

Out and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0336 491777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT)



| Air quality | | | High tides |
|----------------|------|------|---------------------------|
| Look for today | | | |
| London | Mod | Good | London |
| England | Good | Mod | Liverpool |
| Wales | Good | Good | Abermouth |
| England | Good | Good | Hull (Albert Dock) |
| England | Good | Good | Grenock |
| Scotland | Good | Good | Dun Laoghaire |
| Ireland | Good | Good | Height measured in metres |

| World weather [†] most recent available figure at noon local time | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|--------------|---------|-------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| Akrotiri | 8 08 88 | Christchurch | 1 28 78 | Lecce | 1 18 84 | Perth | 1 06 88 |
| Algiers | 8 28 88 | College | 0 22 88 | Los Angeles | 1 18 88 | Peri Stanley | 1 14 87 |
| Amman | 8 01 88 | Copenhagen | 1 18 81 | Luxembourg | 1 20 88 | Prague | 0 81 88 |
| Amsterdam | 8 21 78 | Corfu | 0 28 77 | Madrid | 0 26 88 | Berkeley | 0 8 87 |
| Anchorage | 8 11 88 | Dakar | 0 28 77 | Majorca | 2 28 73 | Rhodes | 0 22 72 |
| Alexandria | 8 23 78 | Damascus | 0 31 68 | Malaga | 2 28 72 | Rio de Janeiro | 0 08 88 |
| Baekgaard | 8 19 88 | Dhaka | 0 27 88 | Malta | 1 18 84 | Riyadh | 0 78 88 |
| Sokrala | 8 04 88 | Eire | 0 18 85 | Madrid | 1 34 88 | Rome | 2 22 72 |
| Bangkok | 8 08 88 | Florence | 0 28 73 | Mosca | 0 40 84 | San Fran | 1 14 87 |
| Berkhades | 8 28 84 | Frankfurt | 1 28 88 | Wellington | 0 18 84 | Santiago | 0 18 84 |
| Barcelona | 8 20 88 | Funchal | 1 21 78 | Mexico City | 0 21 88 | Sensi | 0 08 88 |
| Beira | 8 30 88 | Beira | 1 21 78 | Wien | 0 31 88 | Singapore | 0 06 88 |
| Belgrade | 8 22 72 | Gibraltar | 0 18 88 | Wiles | 0 25 77 | Krasnogorsk | 0 08 72 |
| Berlin | 8 23 88 | Istanbul | 1 15 58 | Wombez | 1 25 78 | Sydney | 1 17 68 |
| Bernsda | 8 22 78 | Hong Kong | 0 18 88 | Wostrowi | 0 22 72 | Taipei | 0 21 88 |
| Blankertz | 8 28 77 | Helsinki | 2 28 78 | Moscow | 1 18 88 | Tel Aviv | 0 57 88 |
| Bogota | 1 16 64 | Izmir | 0 18 88 | Wroclaw | 2 21 78 | Tenerife | 0 81 78 |
| Bordeaux | 8 04 78 | Jakobabad | 0 28 88 | Salzburg | 1 22 78 | Tokyo | 0 87 01 |
| Brisbane | 8 21 78 | Jakarta | 0 30 81 | Kasaei | 0 28 84 | Tunis | 1 00 88 |
| Brussels | 8 21 78 | Jeddah | 0 46 84 | Sur Dukh | 1 27 81 | Valencia | 1 18 88 |
| Bucharest | 8 22 72 | Jersusalem | 1 28 82 | New Orleans | 2 28 82 | Vancouver | 1 14 67 |
| Budapest | 8 22 72 | Johannesburg | 0 28 78 | New York | 1 18 81 | Vedice | 2 21 78 |
| Buenos Aires | 8 21 70 | Karachi | 0 09 82 | Nice | 0 28 88 | Venice | 0 04 78 |
| Cairo | 1 00 87 | Kathmandu | 0 87 81 | Blonda | 2 28 82 | Warren | 0 81 78 |
| Caro Town | 8 17 78 | Kinston | 0 53 88 | Geia | 1 17 83 | Washington | 0 81 78 |

| | HT | PM | HT | Lighting-up times | | | | Sun & moon |
|----|------|-------|------|-------------------|-------|----|------|-------------------|
| 27 | 6.6 | 13:51 | 6.9 | Belfast | 21.12 | 10 | 5.28 | Sun rises: 05.19 |
| 59 | 8.8 | 23:18 | 8.8 | Birmingham | 20.47 | 10 | 5.20 | Sun sets: 20.36 |
| 48 | 12.0 | 19:11 | 12.3 | Bristol | 20.46 | 10 | 5.27 | Moon rises: 16.18 |
| 07 | 7.9 | 16:18 | 8.1 | Glasgow | 21.11 | 10 | 5.15 | Moon sets: 04.51 |
| 15 | 3.0 | 00:54 | 3.0 | London | 20.36 | 10 | 5.17 | Full moon: May 11 |
| 26 | 3.8 | 23:41 | 3.7 | Manchester | 20.53 | 10 | 5.18 | |
| | | | | Newcastle | 20.56 | 10 | 5.09 | |

Love, sex, pain, betrayal, sacrifice, pity, remorse, redemption

In Act I *Alfredo* falls for *Violetta*. By the end of Act III so will the 3000 men in the audience.

Verdi's La traviata *The Royal Opera at the Royal Albert Hall, 12 - 23 May. Tickets from £10. Telephone 0171 589 8212*

The bootleggers who strike discord

Some bands give away their unofficial recordings, but is this just a smart move against piracy? Fiona Sturges reports



Witness: Former Beatle George Harrison this week, as the 'dead boring' copyright case continued. Photograph: PA

So that's that. At the end of a long and winding saga, the former members of the Beatles yesterday won their court case, and Lingasong Music of Waltham Abbey, Essex, will not be able to release CDs of the group's 1962 performance in the Star Club in Hamburg.

But other musicians are often perfectly happy to hand out unofficial recordings. Some even make a point of it.

At a concert just last week at the Hanover Grand, in London, Money Mark (better known as the Beastie Boys' keyboard player) sat a tape recorder on his keyboard and taped himself performing his most popular track, 'Coy'. At the end of the song he threw the tape into the audience, saying, 'I've made a bootleg copy of this song in every city that I played.'

Money Mark is by no means the first musician openly to endorse bootlegging. The cult Sixties psychedelic band, the Grateful Dead, were outspoken in their approval of music piracy, viewing it as part of the creative process, while Eighties rock outfit Dire Straits distribute bootlegs via their fan club.

But what is ostensibly an acceptance of this illegal practice

may be a smart ploy to put pirates out of business. Artists who bring out their own free unofficial recordings leave little room for bootlegged editions. Before a concert on Radio One in 1991, U2 distributed blank tapes complete with track listings and covers so that fans could make their own recording.

Illegal tapes can, on the other hand, create a market for concert recordings or unreleased tracks from which record companies and artists can benefit. Illegal recordings of Bob Dylan concerts had long been distributed until Colombia released two box-sets - *Biograph* and *The Bootleg Series 1-3* - in 1991. These contained the same bootlegs that were being sold illegally, but of a superior quality.

Since the updating of copyright laws in 1988 record companies have come down hard on perpetrators.

Last year Oasis battled with illegal versions of their album *Be Here Now*, offered on the Internet before its release. A fan, Steve Pockett, had pirated songs from a preview tape and left a message on an Oasis website offering copies. Creation

and Sony issued a writ claiming colossal damages. The law now says that copyright generally lasts for the life of the author, plus 70 years after his or her death. The Act also outlaws the selling and distributing of any sound recordings without the consent of the artist and/or record company.

And it's not just the fans who get caught out. The Verve were forced to hand over all their royalties for 'Bitter Sweet Symphony' to Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and former manager Allen Klein after us-

ing an orchestral version of the Stones' 'The Last Time' even though the reference was felt to be 'subliminal' by lead singer Richard Ashcroft. The British Phonographic Institute's anti-piracy library has compiled a list of the most bootlegged artists in the UK. Needless to say, the Beatles are at the top of it with a staggering 280 titles. They are closely followed by Led Zeppelin, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, Nirvana, Elvis Presley, Oasis and Tori Amos.

Dance acts have also come

to a cropper over sampling, an area of bootlegging where the legislation is still unclear. Musicians have been caught out assuming that their samples are undetectable or too obscure. The KLF (Copyright Liberation Front) illegally used Abba samples in their 1987 album *What The Fuck Is Going On?* - they ended up taking thousands of recalled copies to Sweden and publicly burning them in a pyre. The album was later released without samples. The result is a mostly silent recording, with instructions showing how to rebuild the original album with your own samples.

But where established acts can afford the cost of sampling, others find it financially crippling. Blueboy's first chart-topping track 'Remember Me' samples US jazz musician Marlena Shaw's 'Woman In The Ghetto'. In handing over 25 per cent of royalties, Blueboy believe the sample to have cost them £250,000. Antony Johnson, managing director of their label, Pharn Records, said: 'Blueboy have made a classic out of a record nobody knew.'

Cheap-calls pioneer set to ring up £100m from telecoms sale

By Peter Thal Larsen

A FORMER actor who brought cheap international calls to thousands of telephone users is set to pocket about £100m by selling his company to a Japanese telecoms giant

Tom McCabe, who played bit parts in *Minder* and ran a telephone dating agency before founding Swiftcall in 1993, is currently understood to be negotiating the sale to KDD, the Japanese telecoms operator. A deal could be announced as early as next week.

Swiftcall has grown rapidly by offering cheap international telephone calls, undercutting established operators such as British Telecom and Mercury.

It currently has 250,000 customers and last year sold 1.5m pre-paid telephone cards which offer users international calls at rates up to 50 per cent cheaper than BT. It has recently started offering similar services in the US and Ireland.

Swiftcall currently offers calls to the United States at just



Tom McCabe: Abandoned flotation for outright sale

12p a minute, while BT charges 24p. A call to France costs 14p a minute, compared to 20p with BT.

Mr McCabe's achievement is all the more impressive because Swiftcall does not own its own telephone lines.

It is what is known in the industry as a reseller, renting large chunks of capacity from existing operators and then

selling it through aggressive marketing campaigns.

Swiftcall had been preparing a stock-market flotation in London and New York. However, Mr McCabe has now decided to sell the company outright.

Last year, Mr McCabe, who owns 100 per cent of Swiftcall, gave KDD an option to take a 20 per cent stake in the company.

Swiftcall was the first reseller to enter the market, effectively breaking the duopoly held by BT and Mercury and forcing them to cut international call charges.

It has since been followed by a slew of other operators such as First Telecom which have begun to offer similar call rates.

However, industry analysts are concerned that, as competition increases, the resellers will be squeezed.

Swiftcall's growth has slowed dramatically in recent years. In the 12 months to the end of May, the company is likely to have made revenues of £27m, compared to £24m last year.



The way forward: Railtrack reveals its latest device to tackle the autumn menace of recalcitrant leaves on the line. Photograph: Tim Vickery/National Pictures

Unveiled: a weapon to clear the wrong sort of leaves off the line

Rail chiefs yesterday rolled out the latest device to tackle the bane of passengers' lives - leaves on the line. Railtrack's new £1m multi-purpose track machine will deal not only with leaves but ice, weeds and fire.

The new machine, displayed at Waterloo Station in London and then demonstrated at nearby Clapham Junction, has high-

pressure water jets to clear lines. Once the jets have gone into action, it puts sandite - a sticky gel-like substance - on the line to stop wheels sliding. The first of 25 models will come into service in August 1999, with others being gradually introduced until the end of 2000.

"Leaves will always fall on the line, but the new machines will help us keep the tracks clear and make autumn travel more punctual," said Brian Mellitt, Railtrack's engineering and production director.

The concept vehicle was developed by Amec Rail of Croydon, Surrey, which is part of the consortium building the new fleet. The production model will be built by Windhoff of Germany.

Hit-man who took pity on female victim gets two years in prison

A HIT-MAN who spared his female victim after losing his nerve was jailed for two and a half years yesterday.

Orville Wright, 26, had agreed a £4,000 fee from his intended victim, Theresa Pitkin, 30, a mother of three, and told her he could not go through with it. Ms Pitkin had told the court: "I thought he was going

to rape me but then he told me he had been contracted to kill me."

At first Wright said he had been fired by a friend of his ex-lover's ex-crime boss. But then he said the ex-lover, 30-year-old David Martin, had contacted him and ordered her murder.

Mr Martin has not been charged and denies any in-

volvement. Ms Pitkin kept Wright talking and eventually he lost his nerve and decided not to go through with the killing.

Mark Hill, prosecuting, said: "He was a hit-man about to carry out the killing and that he did not do it is a great relief to Miss Pitkin and others. He is a hit-man who lost his nerve."

Wright, of Bruce Grove,

north London, was found guilty last month of aggravated burglary with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

He said he went into the flat to warn Ms Pitkin about the contract killing but never intended to carry it out.

Mark Pallinchi, defending, said Ms Pitkin and her mother had forgiven Wright - and even

offered to buy a ticket so he could return to Jamaica.

Judge David Murchie said he had reduced Wright's sentence because of the unusual circumstances of the case.

The judge told Wright, who worked in Jamaica for seven years as a legal clerk: "I can't forget her words that you were a hit-man who lost his nerve."

This week

"There are more interesting things than sport on a Saturday afternoon. Murder, for instance."

THE SATURDAY PLAY continues with "The Black Spectacles", Sir Donald Sinden plays John Dickson Carr's sleuth, Dr Gideon Fell, in a thoroughly engrossing whodunit. This afternoon, 3.02 - 4.00.

"Ssshhh! This is strictly off the record."

WESTMINSTER HOUR. At the end of the programme, Simon Hoggart shares the secrets of Westminster with the rest of Britain in "It's a Funny Old World". Sunday evenings from 10 May, 10.45 - 11.00.

"What kind of loving would you expect from Mr Bean?"

BOOK AT BEDTIME continues with Sean Bean reading "A Kind of Loving", Stan Barstow's tale of love in Yorkshire. Weekday evenings from Monday 11 May, 10.45 - 11.00.

"Ever heard of a talk show host with more problems than her audience?"

THE EMERALD GREEN SHOW. Alcoholism, Adoption, Analysts. And that's before Emerald even goes to work. New comedy on Tuesday mornings from 12 May, 11.30 - 12.00.

"It used to be penniless students."

Now it's skint parents."

THE LEARNING CURVE. Libby Purves describes the best university courses, campuses and value for money. Tuesday afternoons from 12 May, 4.02 - 4.30.

"The Moral Maze: Where there are at least three sides to every story."

THE MORAL MAZE. An ethical debate where nothing is black and white. Michael Buerk tries not to provide any answers. Wednesday evenings from 13 May, 8.02 - 8.45. Repeated Saturday evenings, 10.15.

"How interesting. Radio 4 talks about the weather."

STRANGE WEATHER DAYS. From summer snow to walls of water to freak tornadoes. You'll never complain about the weather again. Thursday mornings from 14 May, 9.30 - 9.45.

BBC RADIO 4

92-95FM & 198LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Jails to take softer line on cannabis

By Ian Burrell
Home Affairs Correspondent

PRISON governors are to be urged to take a softer line against prisoners using cannabis as part of a new government strategy on drug use in prison.

Instead, more resources will be directed at tackling heroin users by subjecting them to repeated drug testing and greater punishments.

The *Independent* has acquired a copy of the 23-page review document which forms the basis for the new strategy, which will be announced on Tuesday by drugs minister George Howarth.

Prison service officials have been concerned that the large-scale use of mandatory drug-testing has led to thousands of drug-using inmates being given up to 35 "extra days" on their sentence. More than 16,500 prisoners - mostly cannabis users - were given punishments of extra days in the last financial year. This is

equivalent to filling one and a half jails for a year at a cost of over £10m.

Governors are to be urged to "distinguish between drug markets which generate the most harm to individuals and prisoner safety and those that are less damaging". They are advised to "increase the differential" between punishments for cannabis and for Class A drugs and to consider alternative punishments such as loss of privileges and restrictions on visits.

Both staff and prisoners indicated in the report that they believe the system bears down too heavily on cannabis users. It states that 82 per cent of prisoners agreed with the statement: "People should be able to smoke cannabis in prison without fear of punishment."

The review adds that "more surprisingly perhaps, interviews with wing officers revealed ambivalent attitudes to reporting prisoners for smoking cannabis". Some 44 per cent of staff agreed with the statement:

"Personal use of cannabis is not detrimental to good order and discipline".

The review makes clear that drugs policies in prison will fall into line with those recently announced by "drugs tsar" Keith Hellawell for the wider public. This means a shift in emphasis towards improved drug treatment and education in order to reduce demand.

The report carries some positive findings on the extent of drug use in prison, which was running out of control only two years ago. Positive drug tests among prisoners have fallen from 34.6 per cent in December 1995 to less than 20 per cent in the early months of this year.

The mandatory random drug-testing programme, which requires some 10 per cent of inmates to be tested, is expensive. The review recommends that governors reduce the amount of mandatory testing and concentrate resources on inmates who have previously been found to misuse a Class A drug.



Churchman's holiday: the Bishop of Willesden, the Rt Rev Graham Dow, working as a conductor on Metrolink's route 26 from Willesden to Holborn yesterday as part of a 'Faith in Work' initiative

Photograph: R. Waterson

Acne drug is safe - experts

By Jeremy Lawrence
Health Editor

EXPERTS warned yesterday that a backlash against the acne drug, Roaccutane, following reports of 24 cases in which the patients' mental state improved when taken off the therapy and worsened when therapy re-started. A spokesman for the FDA said: "It is us that is an important clue."

Dr Hywel Williams, consultant dermatologist at University Hospital, Nottingham, who specialises in adolescent acne said he had treated more than 1,000 patients with Roaccutane. "Many patients with acne are profoundly depressed. My gut feeling is the risk of mental illness is far greater from withholding Roaccutane than from giving it appropriately."

"Of the patients I have treated, the thing they have volunteered about their mood is that they feel a damn sight better because, having struggled with the disease for years, at last they have found something that shifts it."

drug, but says there is no proof that Roaccutane was the cause.

It agreed the change to the American labelling with the US Food and Drug Administration following reports of 24 cases in which the patients' mental state improved when taken off the therapy and worsened when therapy re-started. A spokesman for the FDA said: "It is us that is an important clue."

Dr Hywel Williams, consultant dermatologist at University Hospital, Nottingham, who specialises in adolescent acne said he had treated more than 1,000 patients with Roaccutane. "Many patients with acne are profoundly depressed. My gut feeling is the risk of mental illness is far greater from withholding Roaccutane than from giving it appropriately."

"Of the patients I have treated, the thing they have volunteered about their mood is that they feel a damn sight better because, having struggled with the disease for years, at last they have found something that shifts it."

Child-porn nurse banned

A MALE nurse convicted on obscenity charges as a result of investigations into paedophile activity at Ashworth Hospital was struck off his professional register. William Baird, of St Helens, Merseyside, was found guilty of professional misconduct at a hearing in London. He was convicted in 1994 of possessing child pornography and fined £250 for each of two offences of possessing indecent photographs of a child under the age of 16. He was also fined £500 for making, signing or delivering an untrue declaration to avoid paying customs duty.

'Bill' star in cuffs in court

BILLY MURRAY, a star of *The Bill*, appeared in handcuffs at Grays Magistrates Court, Essex, yesterday to face a charge of intimidating Andrew Joyce, 20, intending to obstruct or interfere with the course of justice. The case was adjourned to next month and Mr Murray was bailed. He was already on unconditional bail on two charges of common assault and one of violent disorder after an alleged incident involving Mr Joyce and Bryan Basquill, 22.

Firm defends standards

A BUTCHER'S son yesterday rejected a claim that the family firm tried to hide the scale of its wholesale business at the time of the world's worst outbreak of *E. coli* O157 food poisoning, which claimed 21 lives. Martin Barr, 30, denied that John M Barr and Son was a big-scale operator in the supply of cooked meats. He said that hygiene practices were no different to other butchers' shops.

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Quiet drink that ended in murder

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

WHAT started out as a quiet evening drink with friends at a West Yorkshire pub ended in a nationwide murder hunt for a doctor on the run.

The bloody chain of events began simply enough as Vicki Fletcher, 21, relaxed at the Castlefields public house in Castleford on Thursday night.

Stephie Thackray, the pub's manager, recalled Ms Fletcher seeing a man she knew standing outside in the car park, looking through the window.

"She went outside to meet him and the hell broke loose. Shots were firing everywhere, and everyone dived for cover. Everyone was shouting 'get down, get down'."

"There were about 80 people inside the pub and bullets came straight through the inner doors and went into the bar. Glass and mirrors were shattered. It's miraculous no one else was hit."

Dawn Sanders, 33, took up the story: "I heard three shots and then



Wanted man: Police are seeking Dr Thomas Shanks

another three and went dashing out, and saw the girl lying on the ground.

"She had been hit in the stomach and leg. Somebody tried to find a pulse and it was very faint."

"People were holding her hand and stroking it, telling her to hold on, but she was unconscious."

"Somebody from the pub rushed out with a dressing which they put on her side. There was blood every-

where; she was lying in a pool of blood - it was horrific."

Mr Thackray said that following the shooting he saw the gunman "casually walk back to his car, get into it and calmly drive away".

Ms Fletcher had managed to climb over metal railings and was heading back to the pub's entrance when the gunman fired again, leaving her dying on the ground.

Spent cartridge cases from a large automatic weapon littered the ground at the scene of the shooting yesterday and bullet marks could be seen in the brick wall of the pub and in the wooden window frames, next to a shattered window.

Police released the name of an anaesthetist, Dr Thomas Shanks, 47, who worked with Ms Fletcher at Pontefract General Infirmary, where the nurse died early yesterday of

wounds to her back, arms and legs.

The couple had been having a stormy though long-standing relationship and are believed to have been involved in a heated row at a pub the night before the shooting.

Police said that Dr Shanks, a former Army officer, was "armed and

dangerous", and warned the public not to approach him.

As a precaution, officers closed Kings Heath junior, infant and nursery schools, where the doctor's estranged wife works, and took Dr Shanks's nine-year-old daughter out of her school. Other relatives were also moved from their homes to other accommodation.

Armed police spent the afternoon watching the flat in the hospital grounds where Dr Shanks lived with Miss Fletcher, but the anaesthetist was not inside.

Miss Fletcher was described as an attractive, popular young woman who trained as a student nurse at Pontefract General Infirmary and had worked there as a state registered nurse since September 1997.

A medical colleague said the doctor was a lively, outgoing person who claimed to have been in the SAS before going to medical school, although the Ministry of Defence would only confirm that he had been a soldier in the Army. He joined in 1968 and left in 1978. He re-enlisted as a doctor in 1983 and was discharged in 1991.

The doctor, who has worked at Pontefract General Infirmary since January 1995, and lived in hospital accommodation there, was reported to have been seen in Pontefract at 8.55am yesterday.

Police said that they were still checking out reports of his sighting, and that searches for his car had so far proved fruitless.

The doctor was described yesterday as a "typical, tough Scot", who was "very fit", and did not "suffer fools gladly".

One neighbour said: "He lived with a pretty, blonde girl, but they were people I never saw close up. I thought he had a good position - he was fit, he had a good job and he seemed to be all right."

"On the face of it, he was a lucky fellow."



Victim: Vicki Fletcher, 21, a nurse, was shot dead outside a pub

Police hunt bomb suspect

By Steve Boggan

A WARRANT was issued for the arrest of an Iranian physicist yesterday after a parcel-bomb explosion to which a private detective and his wife were hurt.

Michael Coyne, a 63-year-old former policeman, and his wife, Margaret, were said to be stable in hospital last night as detectives began an international search for Cyrus Ghiaffy, 57, whose car was found at Heathrow Airport hours after the blast.

The device, which exploded at the Coyne's home in Dundee, was one of three handed in to a TNT parcel delivery office in Thetford, Norfolk, on Thursday. The two others, addressed to intended victims in Kent and Fife, were defused by bomb disposal experts. One was addressed to Derek Lawson, 49, a former solicitor in Dundee.

Dundee Sheriff Court issued the arrest warrant yesterday afternoon. It is understood that Mr Coyne had been involved in investigating a civil case in which Mr Ghiaffy was involved.

Detective Chief Superintendent Tom Ross said Mr Ghiaffy had a number of business

interests in the area, although he refused to say whether these might provide a possible motive for the parcel-bomb attacks.

"I would regard anyone who engages in activities like these as dangerous," he said.

"He should not be approached, but anyone with information to his whereabouts should contact the police immediately."

A spokeswoman for Tayside police said there was no terrorist motive in the attacks.

She said the discovery of Mr Ghiaffy's car at Heathrow Airport meant police were considering the strong possibility that he was no longer in the country.

He is described as 5ft 6ins tall, of a thin build and of Asian appearance with a pock-marked face.

He lived in the St Andrews area of Fife but police would not say whether he had worked as a physicist at the university.

"The fact that he is a physicist and the fact that he is Iranian should not be misconstrued as terrorism," the spokeswoman said. She said there appeared to be a link to a previous civil case.

Mr and Mrs Coyne were reported to be conscious and not seriously injured last night.

Unions make point over low turnout

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

A LOW election turnout has destroyed Tony Blair's argument about high participation: few unions are granted recognition, senior union leaders declared yesterday.

Less than 25 per cent of Londoners voted for a mayor and a new council for London, but the Prime Minister is insisting on a 40 per cent "yes" vote at a workplace before collective bargaining is backed by law. John Monks, TUC leader, joined John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB general union, yesterday in attempting to expose "double standards".

Some union sources believed that predictions of a low turnout had persuaded Downing Street to postpone discussion of the White Paper until next week.

John Monks said on Radio 4: "Less than a quarter of Londoners voted for the introduction of the mayor, but that's going to be enough for the Government. I'm hoping that it will take the same view as far as unions are concerned."

In private the unions have conceded the principle by suggesting a 30 per cent "yes" vote instead of 40 per cent. But union leaders refused to compromise on other issues in the "fairness at work" White Paper.

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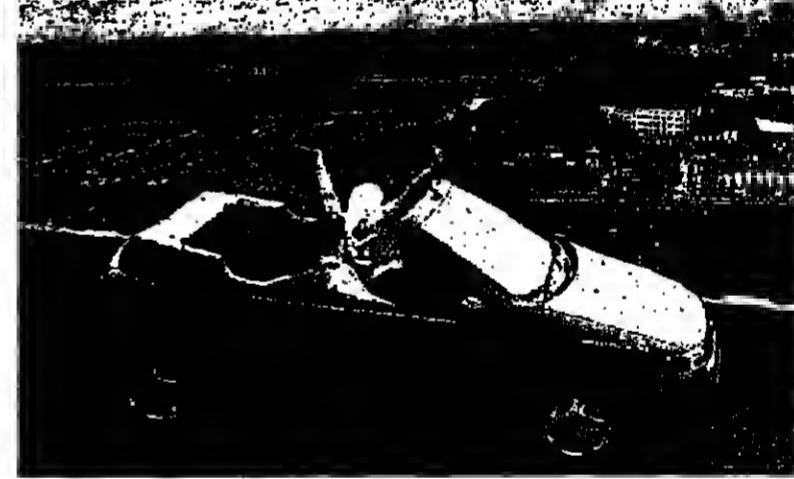
Yes Audrey, my sweet?



Cary, my darling?

Do you mind if we stop a moment?
The view looks so enchanting.

But of course my angel.



I do so love Monaco at this time of year.



Actually, my sweet,
that's Torquay.



Oh don't spoil it, just kiss me you fool!

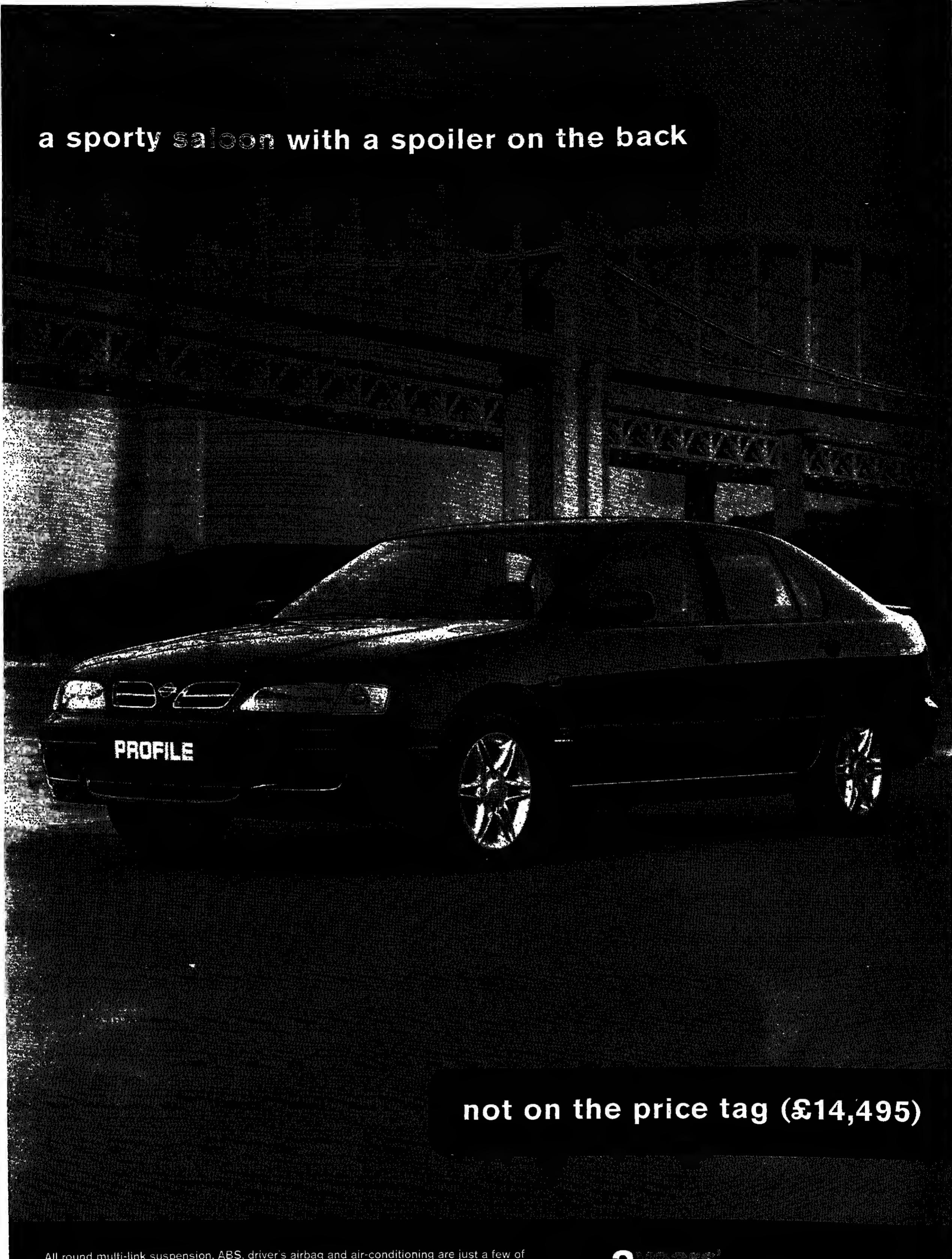


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Swashbuckling Vikings are written out of history

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

THE Vikings have had a bad press. Far from raping, looting and pillaging their way round Britain, they settled down as industrious farmers, sophisticated traders and respectable family men. They did not wear ferocious horned helmets beloved of Hollywood film directors and Danish football fans and they were not all big bullies with hulking biceps. A surprising number were small, puny and under-fed.

That, more or less, is the version of history to be presented to schoolchildren in a new CD-Rom launched yesterday which aims to dispel myths about the Scandinavian raiders. Three of the leading Viking museums in Europe - the national museums of Scotland, Denmark and Ireland - have combined to produce the CD-Rom for 7- to 14-year-olds with the support of the European Commission.

Anne Pedersen, curator of Denmark's national museum, said: "One of the myths about the Vikings is that they were a wild and ferocious people who swept through most of Europe plundering, taking away loot and taking away people."

"But they have been victims of a bad press. We have had the writings of the people who were attacked. If someone had interviewed the Vikings they would have had a different story to tell. They might have pointed out that a lot of the places they took over were easy to attack."

When historians began to look at the archaeological evidence as well as the written accounts, they discovered that the picture of the raping and pillaging Vikings was misleading. Once they had raided, they often settled down for years. There were farms in Scotland and a prosperous trading settlement in Dublin.

The Victorians, it seems, are partly to blame for the Vikings' bad image. According to Mike Spearman, head of multimedia at the national museum of Scotland, they were responsible for the notion that Vikings wore horned helmets.

Nuclear plant shut down by power failure

By Steve Boggan

DOUNREAY, the nuclear plant handling a controversial shipment of atomic waste from Georgia, was closed down on Thursday after its main and back-up power supplies failed.

Nuclear safety inspectors were in urgent talks yesterday after claims by environmentalists that the failure may have highlighted a deadly design fault in Britain's nuclear installations.

The shut-down of the plant, No D1203, is embarrassing for the Government, which agreed to take the Georgian consignment at the request of America. The Georgian nuclear facility from which it was "rescued" was considered to be too dilapidated, and at the mercy of terrorists.

The power cut happened on Thursday at 9pm when telecommunications workers sliced through power lines while digging a trench for cables around the Scottish plant. Back-up supplies failed, resulting in the breakdown of a number of systems, including vital ventilation equipment.

Such a failure at Dounreay, although embarrassing, is not necessarily immediately dangerous in a reprocessing plant. However, failure of main and back-up supplies at a nuclear power plant could result in dangerous overheating, a prospect which Greenpeace International wants examined.

"It seems astonishing that Dounreay has been operating all these years with power supply whose back-up appears not to work," said Mike Townsley, a Greenpeace campaigner. "We believe it failed because the main supply and the back-up were run through the same



Licence with history: Left, Hollywood's version with Kirk Douglas (right) and Tony Curtis in the 1958 film *The Vikings*. Right, illustration of a Danish attack on the English coast

The Vikings are probably best known as fierce raiders of other people's lands

Oxford Children's Encyclopedia

Archaeological evidence about the helmets is limited but some have been found with horns. Horned head-dresses have been found but they belonged to an earlier period. Nor did Viking warriors have decorated shields.

According to Dr Pedersen, all Danish schoolchildren are taught that the Vikings wore horned helmets, but that does not stop souvenir shops in Copenhagen selling thousands of figures with horns every year.

In the last century the Up-Helly-a - a celebration of burning Norse boats - began in Shetland but there is no evidence that this was a Viking tradition. Commercialism and films still perpetuate the myths.

Dr Spearman enjoyed the film *The Vikings*, starring Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis, but describes it as like *Braveheart*, "a case of Hollywood inventing history for us".

Others myths are also hard to dispel. Investigation of burial grounds, he says, shows that the Vikings were not a tall, well-built race. Many of the remains suggest that many were small and did not get enough to eat. Indeed, Dr Spearman argues, "evidence shows that they were probably very similar to races such as the Picts who were already settled here. It is very

difficult to see the difference between a Pictish settlement and a Viking one in terms of its equipment and lifestyle."

He says: "We are trying to use the wider scientific evidence to put forward a more rational view of the Vikings. We have to make sure that the next generation has a better idea of the truth. It was a very complicated society and they were

a sophisticated people. We have to build them up on our own terms. For instance, they regarded slavery as a fact of life."

The CD-Rom, *Looking for Vikings*, is being sent free to all Scottish, Irish and Danish schools next month. Additional copies will be available at a basic charge from all three museums. It begins with some of the false images associated with Vikings

and goes on to show some of the archaeological discoveries of the last 150 years - including an eighth-century Celtic graffiti-inscribed reliquary discovered in Norway, a complete Vig boat and swords found at burial sites in Dublin, Jutland and the Isle of Eigg and a silver thistle brooch from Ireland. The programme is available in English, Danish, Irish and Gaelic.



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Maximum deposit £2,270. Minimum

The final count in local elections and London's referendum THE CAPITAL'S DECISION

BARKING & DAGENHAM: Yes 20,534 (73.49%) No 7,406 (26.51%) Electorate 112,759; Turnout 27,940 (24.78%)
BARNET: Yes 55,487 (69.62%) No 24,210 (30.38%) Electorate 225,608; Turnout 79,697 (35.33%)
BEXLEY: Yes 36,527 (63.28%) No 21,195 (36.72%) Electorate 166,246; Turnout 57,722 (34.72%)
BRENT: Yes 47,309 (78.38%) No 13,050 (21.62%) Electorate 168,817; Turnout 60,359 (35.75%)
BRONLEY: Yes 51,410 (57.08%) No 38,662 (42.92%) Electorate 22,309; Turnout 90,072 (40.16%)
CAMDEN: Yes 36,007 (81.18%) No 8,348 (18.82%) Electorate 135,073; Turnout 44,355 (32.84%)
CITY OF LONDON: Yes 977 (62.99%) No 574 (37.01%) Electorate 5,144; Turnout 1,551 (30.15%)
CROYDON: Yes 53,863 (64.72%) No 29,568 (35.28%) Electorate 223,816; Turnout 83,231 (37.19%)
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA: Yes 20,832 (70.32%) No 8,469 (29.68%) Electorate 102,275; Turnout 28,533 (27.90%)
ENFIELD: Yes 44,297 (67.18%) No 21,639 (32.82%) Electorate 200,826; Turnout 65,936 (32.83%)
GREENWICH: Yes 36,756 (74.84%) No 12,356 (25.16%) Electorate 151,510; Turnout 49,112 (32.42%)

HACKNEY: Yes 31,956 (81.62%) No 7,195 (18.38%) Electorate 115,828; Turnout 39,151 (33.80%)
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM: Yes 29,171 (77.94%) No 8,255 (22.06%) Electorate 111,520; Turnout 37,426 (33.56%)
HARINGEY: Yes 36,296 (83.76%) No 7,038 (16.24%) Electorate 145,003; Turnout 43,334 (29.88%)
HARROW: Yes 38,412 (68.82%) No 17,407 (31.18%) Electorate 154,973; Turnout 55,819 (36.02%)
HAVERING: Yes 36,390 (60.47%) No 23,788 (39.53%) Electorate 178,145; Turnout 60,178 (33.78%)
HILLINGDON: Yes 38,518 (63.10%) No 22,523 (36.90%) Electorate 177,214; Turnout 61,041 (34.44%)
HOUNSLOW: Yes 36,957 (74.64%) No 12,554 (25.36%) Electorate 154,996; Turnout 49,511 (31.94%)
ISLINGTON: Yes 32,826 (81.55%) No 7,428 (18.45%) Electorate 117,887; Turnout 40,254 (34.15%)
KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES: Yes 28,621 (68.69%) No 13,043 (31.31%) Electorate 101,313; Turnout 41,664 (41.12%)
LAMBETH: Yes 47,391 (81.80%) No 10,544 (18.20%) Electorate 182,842; Turnout 57,935 (31.69%) (31.78%)

LEWISHAM: Yes 40,188 (78.42%) No 11,060 (21.58%) Electorate 174,890; Turnout 51,248 (29.30%)
MERTON: Yes 35,418 (72.20%) No 13,633 (27.80%) Electorate 130,627; Turnout 49,053 (37.55%)
NEWHAM: Yes 33,084 (81.37%) No 7,755 (18.63%) Electorate 145,750; Turnout 40,659 (27.90%)
REDBRIDGE: Yes 42,547 (70.16%) No 18,096 (29.84%) Electorate 173,754; Turnout 60,645 (34.90%)
RICHMOND-UPON-THAMES: Yes 39,115 (70.80%) No 16,135 (29.20%) Electorate 124,057; Turnout 55,250 (44.54%)
SOUTHWARK: Yes 42,196 (80.70%) No 10,089 (19.30%) Electorate 159,905; Turnout 52,285 (32.70%)
TOWER HAMLETS: Yes 32,630 (77.51%) No 9,467 (22.49%) Electorate 123,060; Turnout 42,097 (42.21%)
WANDSWORTH: Yes 57,010 (74.32%) No 19,655 (25.68%) Electorate 198,361; Turnout 76,705 (38.67%)
WESTMINSTER: Yes 28,413 (71.48%) No 11,334 (28.52%) Electorate 125,054; Turnout 39,747 (31.78%)



Counting up: Tony Blair greeting reporters outside No 10 yesterday after the local election and London mayor referendum results. Photograph: PA

METROPOLITAN AUTHORITIES

BARNESLEY
Lab, 63; Ind, 2; C, 1.
Lab, No change

BIRMINGHAM
Lab, 83; C, 17; LD, 16; Others, 1.
Lab, No change

BOLTON
Lab, 47; C, 8; LD, 5.
Lab, No change

DUDLEY
Lab, 45; C, 7; LD, 7.
Lab, No change

GATESHEAD
Lab, 51; LD, 15.
Lab, No change

LEEDS
Lab, 82; LD, 9; C, 9; Green, 1.
Lab, No change

LIVERPOOL
Lab, 52; LD, 39; Lab, 4; Ind, 1; Others, 3.
Lab, gain from NOC

MANCHESTER
Lab, 84; LD, 15.
Lab, No change

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
Lab, 53; LD, 15; C, 2; Ind, 1.
Lab, No change

COVENTRY
Lab, 43; C, 7; Ind, 1.

KIRKLEES
Lab, 43; LD, 20; C, 7; Green, 2.
Lab, No change

KNOWSLEY
Lab, 45; LD, 1.
Lab, No change

NOTTINGHAM
Lab, 57; LD, 3.
Lab, No change

SALFORD
Lab, 60; LD, 9; C, 2; Ind, 1.
Lab, No change

ST HELENS
Lab, 42; LD, 10; C, 2.
Lab, No change

STOCKPORT
Lab, 50; Lab, 27; R, 3; C, 3.
Lab, No change

SEFTON
Lab, 31; LD, 23; C, 14; Ind, 1.
NOC, No change

SHEFFIELD
Lab, 50; LD, 36; C, 1.
Lab, No change

SOLIHULL
C, 20; Lab, 17; LD, 11; R, 3.
NOC, No change

ST HELENS
Lab, 42; LD, 10; C, 2.
Lab, No change

WAKEFIELD
Lab, 59; C, 2; Vac, 1; Ind, 1.
Lab, No change

WALSALL
Lab, 52; LD, 16; Ind, 1; Others, 7.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL
Lab, 41; C, 16; LD, 8; Ind, 1.
Lab, No change

WOLVERHAMPTON
Lab, 44; C, 14; LD, 2.
Lab, No change

SUNDERLAND
Lab, 68; LD, 2; C, 1.
Lab, No change

TAMESIDE
Lab, 39; Ind, 4; LD, 2; C, 2.
Lab, No change

TRAFFORD
Lab, 36; C, 23; LD, 4.
Lab, No change

NORTH TYNESIDE
Lab, 43; C, 8; LD, 7; Ind, 2.
Lab, No change

SOUTH TYNESIDE
Lab, 51; LD, 6; Others, 3.
Lab, No change

WOMBLE

WIGAN
Lab, 50; LD, 1; Ind, 1.
Lab, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 41; C, 16; LD, 8; Ind, 1.
Lab, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 44; C, 14; LD, 2.
Lab, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 45; C, 16; LD, 6; Ind, 1.
Lab, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 46; C, 16; LD, 7; Ind, 2.
Lab, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 47; C, 16; LD, 8; Ind, 3.
Lab, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 48; C, 16; LD, 9; Ind, 4.
Lab, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 49; C, 16; LD, 10; Ind, 5.
Lab, gain from NOC

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 50; C, 17; LD, 11; R, 3.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 51; C, 18; LD, 12; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 52; C, 19; LD, 13; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 53; C, 20; Ind, 2; Others, 1.
Lab, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 54; C, 21; Lab, 9; C, 11.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 55; C, 22; LD, 10; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 56; C, 23; LD, 11; R, 3.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 57; C, 24; LD, 12; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 58; C, 25; LD, 13; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 59; C, 26; LD, 14; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 60; C, 27; LD, 15; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 61; C, 28; LD, 16; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 62; C, 29; LD, 17; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 63; C, 30; LD, 18; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 64; C, 31; LD, 19; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 65; C, 32; LD, 20; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 66; C, 33; LD, 21; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 67; C, 34; LD, 22; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 68; C, 35; LD, 23; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 69; C, 36; LD, 24; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 70; C, 37; LD, 25; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 71; C, 38; LD, 26; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 72; C, 39; LD, 27; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 73; C, 40; LD, 28; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 74; C, 41; LD, 29; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 75; C, 42; LD, 30; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 76; C, 43; LD, 31; C, 1.
NOC, No change

WIRRAL

WIRRAL
Lab, 77; C, 44; LD, 32; C, 1.
NOC, No change

Blair set to turn screw on old Labour

By David Walker

A SPECTACULAR Labour win yesterday in Harrow after a late count confirmed a marked suburban shift in its council strength paralleling its parliamentary gains at the last election.

Labour leaders are already using Thursday's election results to increase the pressure on "old" Labour councillors to shape up to the Blairite agenda or to face de-selection.

Tony Blair himself talked of receiving a "message from the electorate" that "good dynamic new Labour councils" were appreciated, leaving unspoken the thought that in Liverpool and Sheffield, where Labour lost heavily, old Labour deserved to lose.

Labour ministers will now review the "best value" programme for councils by which the Government hopes to con-

vince voters it is as serious as the Tories were about efficiency in the town halls while ending compulsory competitive tendering of local services.

However, the voters' willingness to punish sleaze and poor performance was shown to be limited. Labour lost only three seats in Doncaster, where a police investigation is still going on and only four seats in Hull, where allegations of corruption have been flying amid evidence of chronic under-performance in the city's schools.

Official Tory satisfaction at gaining some 250 seats over their 1994 score was dented when in another late result, the party lost control of previously rock-solid Bromley in south London. Though Tories remain the largest party, the Liberal Democrats are likely to take power with Labour support.

Bromley - which in the ear-



ly 1980s led the legal challenge to the Greater London Council led by Ken Livingstone - also registered, at 42 per cent, the most opposition to the Government's plan to give the capital an elected mayor. Enthusiasm for the scheme - if that is the right word to char-

acterise an average turn out of a third of registered electors - was noticeably higher in inner London than in suburbia. Seventy two per cent voted in favour, with 28 per cent against.

In Liverpool, where the Liberal Democrats gained 10 seats to take overall control, there is

now likely to be a concerned effort by Labour officials to reform party procedures. One of the first tasks confronting the Liberal Democrats will be to reconsider putting city services out to private contract - something strenuously resisted by Labour. Liverpool's residents,

who are charged the highest rate of council tax in the country, face a period of industrial action by municipal employees.

The overall result does not much change the geography of local politics, with Labour remaining solidly in control of the Local Government Associa-

tion, based on its strength in London and the cities.

In the capital, Labour lost control in Hillingdon but gained an overall majority in Brent, Waltham Forest and in Lambeth, where council tax was cut last month, the voters gave the Conservative majority five extra seats.

Ringing endorsement: John Prescott celebrating Labour's successes in the capital with the Town Crier of London, Peter Moore. Photograph: Rebecca Naden

The party did well in impregnable boroughs such as Greenwich and Hammersmith and also in areas once considered prime Tory territory, including Ealing, Enfield and Croydon.

The Liberal Democrats, despite aggregate losses totalling just over 100 seats, remain the second strongest local government party - able to lose significant seats in places such as Cheltenham, Worthing and Eastbourne but still stay in charge. The party did, however, lose control in former strongholds, in Kingston upon Thames and the Isle of Wight - where the Tories picked up 9 seats - and saw several of its other authorities move to a position where no single party has a commanding majority.

The Tories gained seats in no set pattern, taking overall control in Runnymede and Tandridge Wells, and picking up odd seats in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Bristol, Portsmouth and Bradford.

The flagship London boroughs did the party proud, registering a number of extra seats. In Wandsworth, where council tax was cut last month, the voters gave the Conservative majority five extra seats.

Women's Coalition urge Irish 'yes' vote

By Kim Sengupta
in Belfast

THE Northern Ireland Women's Coalition yesterday made an impassioned plea for a "yes" vote in the coming referendum, and also announced its intention to field candidates in the subsequent elections for a new Assembly.

The non-Sectarian group, founded two years ago by two women - one Catholic, one Protestant - went on to achieve international acclaim for its role in the peace talks, with Senator George Mitchell saying the agreement would not have been possible without them.

The co-founders of the Coalition, Monica McWilliams, a social scientist, and Pearl Sagar, a social worker, are expected to be among the candidates who will stand at the election due to be held following the referendum on 22 May.

Many observers expected the group would be wound up after the Stormont accord was reached. Instead, it has doubled

its membership to 500, with support increasing by the day. However, entering the political arena has led to problems. Yesterday, the movement's headquarters received a stream of insulting and sexist calls from detractors stating the women should know their place.

More importantly, it faces serious financial problems. The organisation had received a grant in the past from a trust for its work in the education and empowerment of women. But electoral laws prohibit receiving such aid for political work.

■ Two men were the victims of punishment shootings in Belfast. At around 10.30 on Thursday evening a 26-year-old man was abducted at a Loyalist area in the north of the City and shot in the right leg. An hour later a 38-year-old man was shot both on knees and both ankles in Republican West Belfast. Both the men were yesterday recovering in hospital, and police sources blamed paramilitaries for the shootings.

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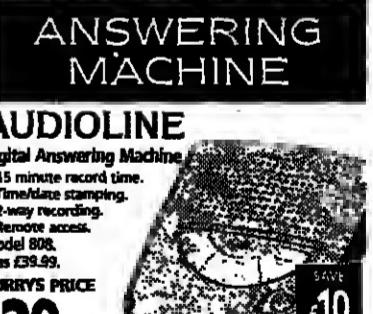
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Palace drops hint that chaplain should resign



By Clare Garner
and Anthony Bevins

CANON Eric James, an Extra Chaplain to the Queen, yesterday stood by his controversial remarks about the merits of an elected head of state, despite a frosty response from Buckingham Palace.

The Palace - which had been attacked for "toadying

sycophancy" by the outspoken canon - delivered a most subtle hint that the Extra Chaplain's resignation might be in order. Certainly, if offered, it appeared that it would be accepted with grateful alacrity.

A Palace spokesman commented on Canon James's declaration that it was time "for a profound reflection upon, and reconsideration of, the

role of the monarch", with the statement: "How he reconciles these comments with his position as Extra Chaplain to the Queen is a matter for him."

But Canon James said yesterday that he had no intention of resigning from his post. "I want to agree that it's my own affair," he said. "I stand by all I've said. We shall wait and see for a little while."

Canon James was a fully-fledged chaplain to the Queen between 1984 and 1995, when he reached the age of 70 and moved on to being an Extra Chaplain. He now preaches once a year at one of the royal chapels, most often in St James's Palace.

Most years he is invited to go on a "jolly" at Holyrood or Sandringham.

Yesterday, republicans welcomed the canon's remarks particularly given the fact that they come from a member of the royal establishment. They hailed him as the first insider to break ranks.

But the equally outspoken

Anne Widdecombe, the former

Tory Minister who left the

Church of England for the

Roman Catholic church, said

yesterday that the canon should mind his own business.

"It's a pity that Canon Eric

James doesn't confine himself

to spiritual matters," she told

The Independent.

"That he should waste such

time on his theory of running

the realm instead of getting on,

spreading the gospel, which is

what he's supposed to do, is a

good example of how the

Church of England has lost its way."

Miss Widdecombe said that while women priests had been the final straw for her departure from the Church of England, "there had been a huge bundle of straw before that, some of

which was this sort of thing - failure to concentrate on the spiritual, and an eternal desire to interfere in politics."

Popular monarch: The Queen meets residents of Poundbury in Dorset whose homes are built on land belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall

anomalous in a society increasingly preoccupied with democratic principles.

So perhaps James's words shouldn't be dismissed. The Canon is surely right to say that abdication should be regarded as an honourable choice. Could he also be right in thinking that the Monarchy would be strengthened, not weakened, by a formalised display of public feeling at the beginning of a reign?

Arguably, the referendum - an instrument liberally used for other purposes - could be employed following a royal death to test and reinforce the Monarchy's legitimacy. At present, the throne passes from incumbent to heir at the moment of decease. But what if, hypothetically, the heir or heiress was judged by a majority of the public to be unsuitable? In modern conditions, the lack of any opportunity to voice dissent could seriously undermine the viability of the system. On the other hand, an open vote on the succession would encourage a healthy civic debate.

The beginnings of new reigns are almost always the time when the Monarchy is most popular - nostalgia and hope tend to mingle, in a royalist cocktail. So the risk to a new incumbent would be small, unless of course, there was a serious problem. Thus, medieval royalty may have relevance after all: a revived version of popular acclamation could tie the Monarchy even more securely into our democracy.

The 'heredity lottery' that produces our monarchs

ONE year into Cool Britannia, can it be that a revolution is beginning to happen after all? A speech this week about the Monarchy, amplified in an article in yesterday's *Independent*, certainly indicates a mood shift in unexpected circles.

Canon Eric James, who delivered a lecture in Westminster Abbey on Thursday obscurely entitled "Spirituality, Shakespeare and Royalty", is a member of the exclusive club of former royal chaplains, a breed not given to iconoclasm. The Canon gave no quarter. But does what he said stand up? Once, such a pronouncement would have been dismissed as maverick. But times have changed.

In any case, much of what he said rang true. Because of the mass media, he pointed out, psychological pressures on royalty - especially on Diana, and now on her children - have become so intolerable that a normal emotional life is virtually impossible. Yet heirs and heiresses are given no choice about their "vocation". Heredity is a "lottery": there is no guarantee that any particular monarch will be up to the job. Meanwhile the "defender of the faith" role of the monarchy in a post-Anglican society needs re-examining.

Electing heirs to the throne might be good for democracy, writes Ben Pimlott

With some of this, it is hard not to agree. Nobody apart from tabloid editors would quarrel about the pressures. Nor are they new: the great constitutionalist Walter Bagehot made a similar point in the last century, when he argued that a Prince of Wales could be expected to be worse behaved than other people, because of the exceptional temptations of his position. Nor would many (apart from bishops, with burns on House of Lords seats) defend the exclusive relationship between a minority sect - the Church of England - and the head of state.

It was not these points, however, that excited the press, but a single sentence in the middle of the sermon. "In England, until 1213," declared the cleric, "the monarch was elected. Maybe the time is returning for election to the task and role."

Fingers tapped, cyberspace hummed. Well, why not? If we

are going to elect Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish assemblies, and a London mayor, if we are to have plebiscites on everything from local government to the future of our currency - why not go the whole hog? Above all - to paraphrase the Canon - it is surely illogical to abolish the hereditary principle of Lords, and not re-consider it in relation to heads of state.

However, the cases are not quite the same. The House of Lords is a law-making - or at any rate law-initiating, law-amending, and law-delaying - body. The Monarchy, by contrast, has become almost co-

tirely symbolic. There is also an additional difference. Being hereditary is neither a defining quality of a second chamber, nor a necessary one. It is, however, both a defining and necessary feature of a monarchy.

Canally, Canon James links his idea to ancient tradition. The comparison is false. In Saxon and Norman times, though successive were often disputed, the eldest son had a *prima facie* right, and - where there was a fumble - candidates were restricted to a tiny gene pool. Successive kings were not elected by the populace, but "acclaimed". Thus, when a new

ruler presented himself in the capital, citizens of London would roar their approval - a ritual maintained in the modern Coronation Service, which ends with the congregation shouting "May the Queen (or King) live for ever!" But those who had the power to affect a succession were powerful barons, not villains-in-the-street. Today the idea of business moguls (or ministers) making the decision wouldn't go down well.

Neither would a fight between the supporters of rival royalists in the hustings. The prospect of fans of the Prince's Trust versus backers of the Save

the Children Fund doesn't sound promising. There is the option of a completely open contest for Buckingham Palace, in which anybody could stand either for a fixed-term occupant, or as Monarch-for-life. The latter system, however, would entrench out-of-touch gerontocrats, while the former amounts to settling up a royal. That is one option, but it shouldn't be confused with reforming the Monarchy.

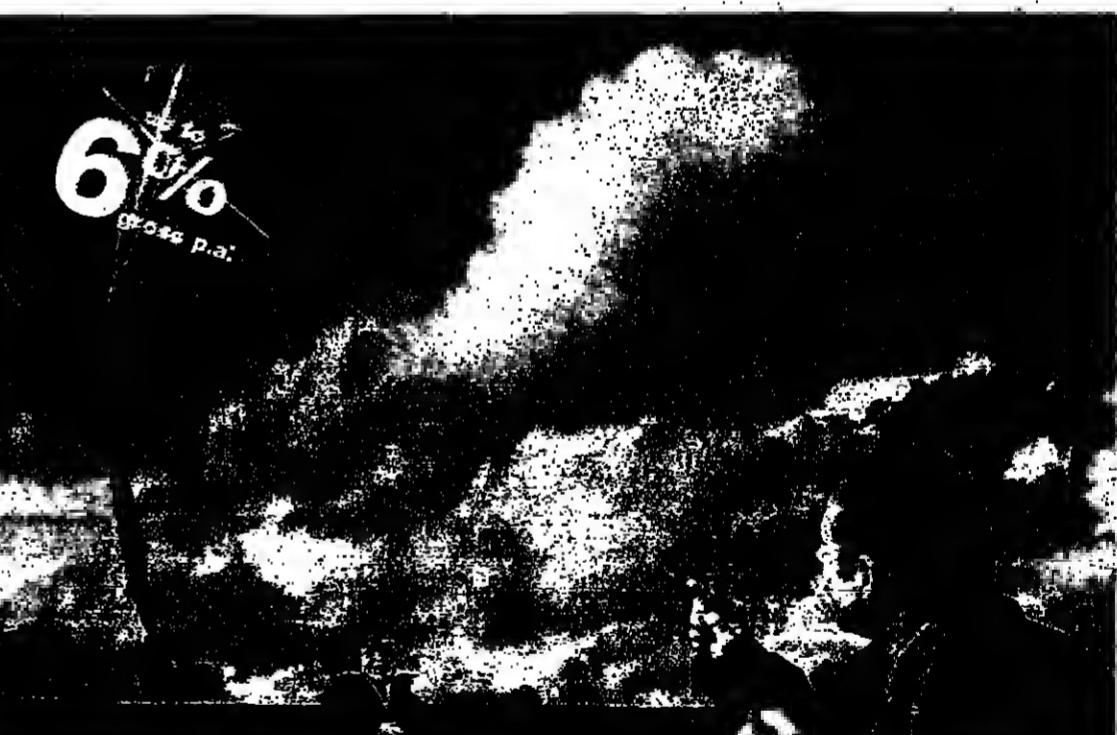
For if the institution has any point (and most people still think it has) it is in providing a Head of State who - though subject to regrettable psycho-

logical pressures - is not subject to everyday political ones. A King or Queen who had to worry about re-election would be a president by a different name.

And yet ... There is the minds of many middle-of-the-road pro-Monarchy people: a sense of unease about current arrangements: the system is certainly a lottery - it always has been. Indeed, it is the arbitrariness of heredity as a guiding principle that makes it tolerable. Nevertheless, the notion of elevating an individual to supreme formal authority, without any involvement of the public, maybe regarded as



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Birmingham: what the G8 summit wives really need to see

Kate Watson-Smyth offers visitors an alternative guide to Britain's second city

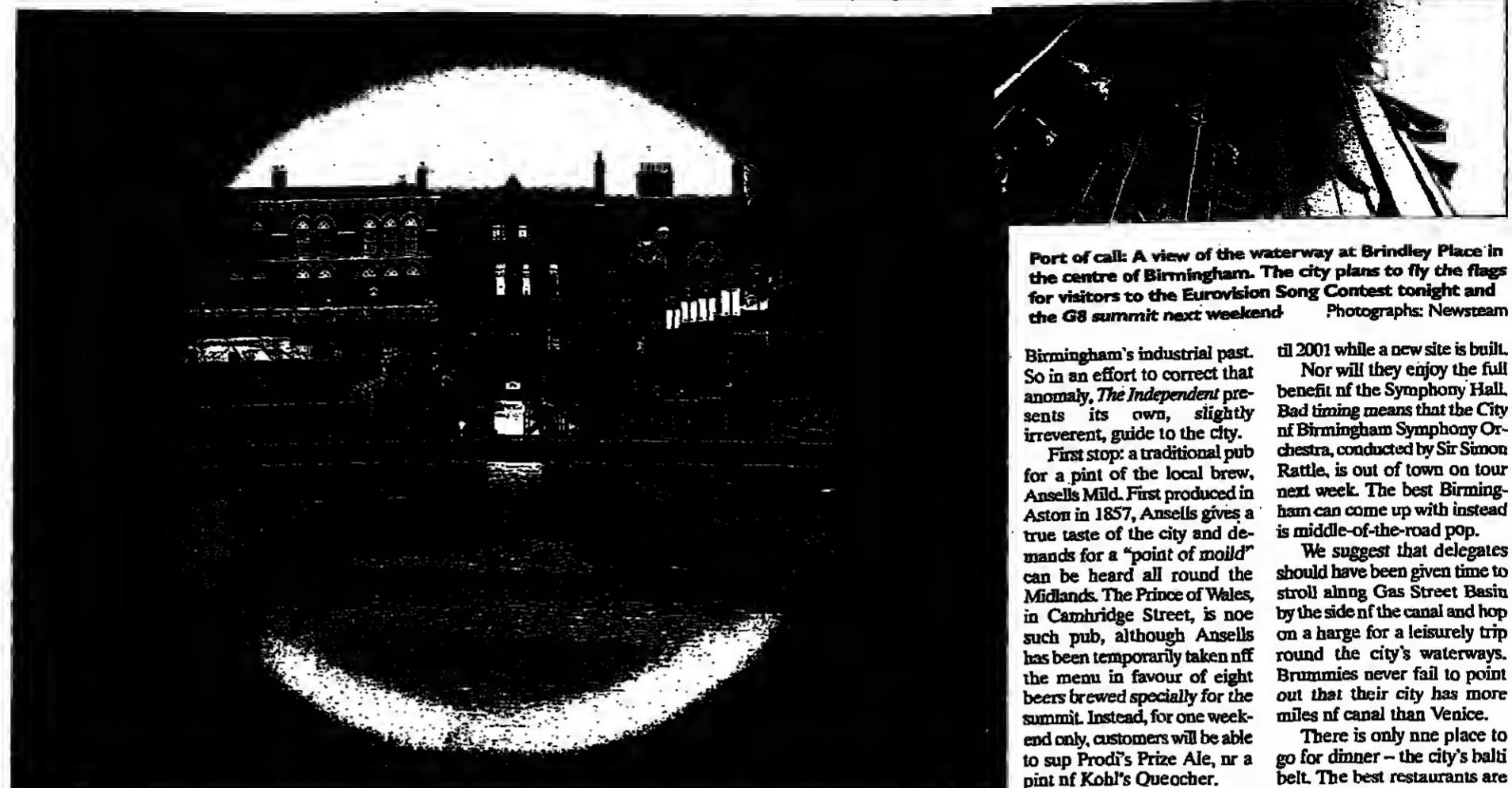
THINK of Birmingham and images of dark and dirty places spring to mind - the car plants, Spaghetti Junction, the HP sauce building and the infamous Bull Ring shopping centre. Perhaps more recent visitors will remember that Birmingham invented the Balti curry, a Kashmiri stew served in a small metal wok and mopped up with nan bread instead of cutlery.

Today, Birmingham begins its attempt to recreate itself as a hip and happening European city when it hosts the Eurovision Song Contest. Its crowning moment will be the following

weekend when it welcomes the heads of government.

Not for them the run-down streets of the Balti belt, nor the rag market. Messrs Clinton, Chirac, Yeltsin et al will be steered away from them in favour of the redecorated Council House in Victoria Square and the rarefied atmosphere of the Botanical Gardens. Instead the proud burghers of Birmingham City Council have planned an itinerary to show the world's leaders what they consider to be the highlights of the city.

First there will be a reception at the Council House,



Port of call: A view of the waterway at Brindley Place in the centre of Birmingham. The city plans to fly the flags for visitors to the Eurovision Song Contest tonight and the G8 summit next weekend. Photograph: Newsteam

Birmingham's industrial past. So in an effort to correct that anomaly, *The Independent* presents its own, slightly irreverent, guide to the city.

First stop: a traditional pub for pint of the local brew, Ansell's Mild. First produced in Aston in 1857, Ansell's gives a true taste of the city and demands for a "point of mold" can be heard all round the Midlands. The Prince of Wales, in Cambridge Street, is no such pub, although Ansell's has been temporarily taken off the menu in favour of eight beers brewed specially for the summit. Instead, for one weekend only, customers will be able to sup Prodi's Prize Ale, or a pint of Kohl's Queacher.

After a few pints, the visitor will be ready to eat. What better than the Midlands' own dish of faggots and peas.

No visit to Birmingham would be complete without a trip to the Science Museum chronicling the city's industrial past. The visiting heads of government will have to return for a trip there: it is closed un-

til 2001 while a new site is built. Nor will they enjoy the full benefit of the Symphony Hall. Bad timing means that the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, is out of town on tour next week. The best Birmingham can come up with instead is middle-of-the-road pop.

We suggest that delegates should have been given time to stroll along Gas Street Basin by the side of the canal and hop on a barge for a leisurely trip round the city's waterways. Brummies never fail to point out that their city has more miles of canal than Venice.

There is only one place to go for dinner - the city's Balti belt. The best restaurants are in Sparkbrook and it's a case of bring your own beer.

But sadly for the heads of government, they will see none of that. Once they have departed, Birmingham will be left with just the smell of fresh paint and beds of wilting flowers in the city centre to remind them of the time the world came to visit.

Call for resignation in blood-supply crisis

By Louise Jury

THE National Blood Authority faced calls for the resignation of its chief executive yesterday as restrictions on blood supplies were introduced.

Blood stocks in London and the South-east have sunk so low that even supplies of the most common blood group, O-positive, are being limited to identified patients only. Hospitals are being asked not to keep their normal reserves. But there are serious shortages across the whole country. Both A and O blood groups have been restricted by up to 20 per cent in recent weeks.

The latest blood crisis comes a month after a damning report by the National Blood Authority. Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, sacked its chairman, Sir Colin

Walker, when he refused to resign over the criticisms.

Yesterday, Liberal Democrat MP Dr Evan Harris said that John Adey, the NBA's chief executive, should go too. Mr Adey was in charge of implementing reforms demanded by the last government. A majority of locally managed blood testing and processing centres were downgraded and a structure of three centrally managed "zones" put in their place.

Dr Harris said the old system should be restored. "There is an urgent need for the Government to take action. They should restore the autonomy of local centres and the confidence of donors."

Figures obtained by *The Independent* show total blood stocks this week were significantly below figures considered acceptable minimums. On

Thursday, for example, there were 2,504 units of O-positive compared with a desirable limit of 3,500. The situation was particularly acute in London and the South-east where there were just 639 units of O-positive.

In a letter to haematologists and blood bank staff, Stuart Penny, head of hospital services, said: "Stocks of group O blood have fallen to a level where we now have to restrict orders to those for identified patients only, ie please order only what you need for planned transfusions and emergency stock rather than maintaining your usual routine stock of group O."

Jane Ellison, the Unison health union secretary for the north-west NBA, said: "Frank Dobson says he is monitoring the situation, but we want to know who is doing the monitoring. Is the NBA policing itself?"

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French publishers fight court censors

By John Lichfield
in Paris

SWINGING penalties imposed by the French courts on two investigative books have provoked an outcry in France against judicial curbs on freedom of information. All the country's publishers are threatening to come together to reissue one of the books – an investigation of business corruption – in defiance of the courts.

The publishers say that the unparalleled fierceness of the court penalties would, if allowed to stand, make any form of challenging non-fiction economically suicidal in France. The controversy arises from legal challenges to two books, an investigation of corruption in business tribunals written by a former police officer and an investigation of the murder of a member of parliament written by two journalists.

In both cases the courts, in Brest and in Toulon, did not ban the entire book. They ordered the publishers to remove several pages which were found to be libellous. What outraged the book industry was the simultaneous decision of

the two courts, 600 miles apart, to impose fierce fines on the publishers for every uncut copy found in the shops. The fines were set at £10,000 a copy in Brest and £1,000 a copy in Toulon – many times the going rate for previous judgments of this kind.

The fines applied instantly – another break with legal precedent – giving the publishers no time to withdraw copies from the shops. In both towns, the court bailiffs were immediately dispatched to tour local book shops and seize offending copies.

The Albin-Michel publishing house, which produced the book called the *Mafia of the Business Tribunals* by the former policeman Antoine Gaudino, faces fines of £580,000. The bailiffs seized 58 copies of the book, at £10,000 a time. The head of the company, Francis Esmeard, said he would appeal but, if his company lost, "it will place our very existence in peril".

The publishing trade federation, the Syndicat National de l'Édition, described the rulings as "exorbitant, disproportionate and prejudicial to freedom of expression". The fed-

eration has protested to the government, which can in theory do nothing since the courts are independent. At a series of crisis meetings in the last two days, the chiefs of the leading French publishing houses have decided to take on the judiciary head on if the appeals are lost later this month.

All French publishers would agree to reissue Mr Gaudino's book in its entirety – challenging the courts to impose even more draconian penalties. The publishers say they accept that there may have been inaccurate or doubtful information in the two books (the other was called *Yann Piat, the Secret History of an Assassination*). But they argue that the nature and scale of the penalties would make it economically suicidal for French publishers to accept any work in the future which investigated political or commercial wrongdoing.

Claude Durand, president of the Payard publishing house, which is not directly involved, said: "The result will be to impose self-censorship, which is even more pernicious in the long run than censorship itself."

Peace offering: A boy putting flowers on a monument at the Second World War museum in Kiev, Ukraine, together with all the other former Soviet republics, today celebrates the 53rd anniversary of victory

Photograph: Reuters



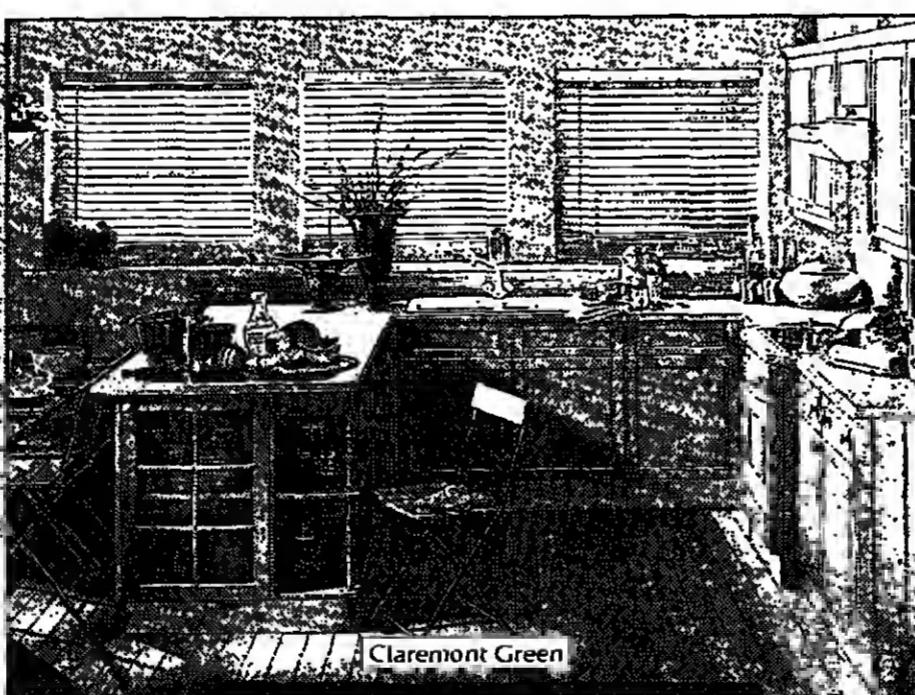
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Russia's racist skinheads terrorise foreigners

RUSSIANS will today hold their annual Victory Day parade in Red Square to celebrate the fact that Hitler and his armies are dead and buried. Would that they could say the same of Nazi ideology and the violence it spawns.

A wave of racist attacks by neo-Nazi skinheads in Moscow is sowing alarm among diplomats and other foreign nationals, and has prompted several embassies to issue warnings to their compatriots.

The mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, was yesterday struggling to defuse an outcry over the more serious incident – the stabbing of an Azerbaijani trader, whose death on Thursday prompted 1,500 angry Azerbaijanis to bear his body through the streets, after wrestling it from ambulances and smashing the windows of their vehicle. The demonstration was broken up by the police.

Mr Luzhkov, an outspoken nationalist whose administration has a long record of mistreating ethnic minorities, blamed the killing on a business dispute.

The Russian capital was multi-ethnic and "has never resolved ethnic or religious conflicts in such a way," he said. But Azerbaijan's embassy has linked it to neo-Nazi skinheads. In addition, local Azerbaijani traders say the killing was witnessed by police, who did not intervene.

The incident came less than

a week after a black US marine was badly beaten up by skinheads at a market in the city's Filii Park, a popular haunt among Muscovites who go there to buy bootleg CDs. Minutes after the attack, one of the assailants – the 22-year-old editor of a neo-Nazi newspaper – gave a television interview in which he bragged about beating up black people, saying they were "attracted to his fists like metal to a magnet". Russia's Foreign Ministry condemned the incident as "repulsive".

The assault prompted the US embassy in Moscow to repeat a warning to Americans of African and Asian ethnicity to be on their guard against Russian skinheads.

Officialdom, especially in Moscow, has tended to reinforce the public prejudice by harassing ethnic minorities, particularly those from the former Soviet republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Before Moscow's lavish 850th anniversary last year, Caucasian traders were harassed by the police in an effort to keep them off the streets.

Since then other reports

Paedophile Briton jailed for 33 years

A BRITISH paedophile who is the son of an Oxford don has been sentenced to 33 years in jail in Thailand after being convicted of sex attacks on young boys.

James Darling was given 48 years at Phuket district court for a string of sexual assaults on boys aged eight to fifteen and separating them from their parents. But his sentence was cut because he pleaded guilty to some of the offences when he was arrested in 1995.

At the hearing Darling, 47, of Edinburgh, son of the late Oxford don and Scottish ornithologist Sir Frank Fraser Darling, issued a statement denouncing Thailand as "an un-reconstructed police state".

He arrived in Thailand four years ago and rented a house close to Rawai Beach, befriending boys from a neighbouring settlement of "sea gypsies". Darling would apparently take them on boat trips to uninhabited islands where he would abuse them.

He was arrested after being reported to police by two organisations, Phuket Child Watch and the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights, but claimed that he was the victim of a witch hunt. His mother, Lady Christina Darling of



James Darling: Convicted in Thailand, where he arrived four years ago, of sex attacks on boys aged 8 to 15

Forres, Inverness, died while he was on trial.

In the statement handed out after sentencing he said that his accusers had "convicted themselves of a crime against humanity".

The involvement of Britons in "paedophile tourism" has been a source of enormous concern to the British government, which has tried to co-operate with South-East Asian countries in an attempt to crack down on the problem. Co-operation agreements are already in place in Thailand, while on a visit last year,

Philippines and Sri Lanka. The Foreign Office said yesterday that it was "looking to see if we can extend this to other countries who are willing to accept our assistance". The co-operation includes help with training local police. British police have been to the three countries, to provide know-how in dealing with the problem.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, made a point of opening a support centre for victims of paedophilia in the Philippines capital, Manila,

US military acts to halt battle of sexes

Britain's armed forces are bringing the sexes together but, chastened by its own experiences, the US is thinking again. Andrew Marshall reports from Washington

GIJOE is back. The toy known as Action Man in Britain, which was deeply unfashionable for so many years, is back on the shelves as an adult toy – sold in limited editions, with special spiffy uniforms.

But GI Joe can't play with GI Jane. That is the view of some of the distinguished men and women of the US Congress, who are trying to make sure that when Americans train for the military, they keep their fingers on their triggers.

The US military has become one of the most integrated professional forces in the world since 1993, when President Clinton cut away a screed of rules that kept women out of key positions. Now, women account for about 20 per cent of the strength of all the armed forces. They fly fighters and bombers, they serve on warships as gunnery officers, and 80 per cent of all jobs are open to them. They cannot (as yet) serve in the tightly confined spaces of submarines, where hot hunking is the rule, and they can't be Navy SEALS, Demi Moore notwithstanding. But everything else, they can and do.

Yet the rise and rise of women in uniform has been accompanied by scandal. The war between the sexes in the US military has become one of its key conflicts over the past few years, with sexual behaviour sometimes seeming as threatening to the Pentagon as Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

The Navy was torn apart in 1991 by the Tailhook affair, when a gathering of naval aviators in Las Vegas got out of hand, spilling over into public sex and the harassment of women. The Army has had its problems, too, notably with accusations of assault and sexual harassment at the Aberdeen training ground in Maryland, and the scandals surrounding Sergeant Major Gene McKinney, the most senior enlisted man. The Air Force's first woman bomber pilot, Lieutenant Kelly Flynn, was dismissed from the service for fraternisation and committing adultery, and then lying about it. Just yesterday, five naval officers were accused of sexual misconduct and having improper relationships with female cadets at the Navy's only boot camp, the Great Lakes Naval Training Centre, north of Chicago.

Not all of this, by any means, can be laid at the door of sexual integration. The Tailhook affair would have happened whether



Lt. Kelly Flynn: dismissed for adultery
Photograph: Sygma

or not women were allowed into the military, and several of the scandals have concerned adulterous liaisons that went on outside the services. But the proliferation of problems and the headline grabbing stories of servicemen behaving badly have inevitably sparked a backlash.

This week, the House National Security Committee shot back. It voted for separate barracks and separate training for men and women, the first indication that the rumble of unhappiness might break out into a war. The kissing has to stop, the committee said; let the shooting start. "All we're trying to do," said Geno Taylor, a Mississippi Democrat, who is one of the key backers of the move, "is get basic training back to basic training, not social experimentation." Roscoe Bartlett, a Maryland Republican, tried to block mixed training last year but got nowhere; now his time may be coming, as support for the measure gathers steam. Mixing the military is something, he says, which "in 5,000 years of recorded history, no successful military has done".

The Spartans, of course, while maintaining an all-male military, were quite keen on having them get as closely acquainted as possible, on the basis that soldiers who had learnt to love each other would fight

together more effectively. But this is probably an argument that President Clinton won't want to get into, with memories of the damaging battles over homosexuality in the military and "Don't ask, don't tell," still fresh in the memory.

"Don't talk, Don't touch," is the new rubric. But that doesn't go far enough for opponents of integration, who want to roll back what they see as politically motivated meddling with the military. "The purpose of basic training is not to advance a civilian feminist agenda, or to teach men and women to get along, but to impose a cultural shock that transforms young civilians... into uniformed members of the armed forces," said Elaine Donnelly, the head of the Center for Military Readiness, a Michigan interest group that focuses on the presence of women and homosexuals in the military.

This is only the first skirmish, of course, and the legislation has a long way to go before it passes into law. The military themselves are adamantly opposed in the idea of re-segregating the services, arguing that it makes no sense and will weaken the fighting capability of the units concerned.

Officials at the Great Lakes Training Centre yesterday insisted that male and female recruits could be trained together at the same base. "I think it's a very good thing because we currently have a fleet that is operating successfully today with men and women working together as a team," said Rear Adm. Kevin Green, the Great Lakes commander.

There is a set of practical issues involved here, of course. For instance, a task force earlier this year pointed out that trying to target training at both men and women may make things too tough for some of the women, and not tough enough for some of the men. "Men were not attaining their full potential because they were not being physically challenged enough, and women were suffering injuries at far greater rate than men," says Ms Donnelly.

But the real problem, undoubtedly, in the minds of opponents of integration is sexual. "Coddle training and sleeping arrangements have led to rampant sexual indiscretions," said Ms Donnelly.

In the end, it all boils down to that favourite old instruction of British Army Sergeants: hands off cocks, on with socks.



Divided: New moves will see male and female recruits separated at training camps

Photograph: FSP

Hero's voyage ends in Hollywood

A survival story to end all survival stories has just come to light. David Usborne on a true war epic



Close shave: Damon Gause gets a haircut after his remarkable escape to Australia
Photograph: Sunlife News/Features

COMING soon to a screen near you: a story of courage and endurance, a story of one man's escape from his Japanese captors in the Second World War, a story of a journey across 3,000 miles of open ocean in a leaky boat with no water and rations of coconut milk and shark flesh. A story of unbelievable human survival.

Unbelievable but, it seems, true. The star will doubtless be a Hollywood idol – Brad Pitt, perhaps, or Ralph Fiennes – but the hero portrayed will be an American aviator who really existed. He was Lieutenant Damon "Rocky" Gause, a flier with the America's 27th Bombardment Group (Light).

Lt Gause did not survive the war. In a final irony, he died in March 1944, not in action, but test-piloting a P47 bomber over the Isle of Wight.

For reasons never determined, he flew nose first into the ground. On the instructions of his father, Lt Gause was not returned to the US, but buried alongside victims of both World Wars at the Cambridge American cemetery in Cambridge.

What is about to make "Rocky" Gause one of the most famous heroes of the war years, however, all happened in the South China Sea two years earlier. Almost as remarkable as the story itself is the manner in which it has come to light today. Throughout his odyssey from the Philippines all the way to Australia, Lt Gause scribbled notes, which he later rewrote as a seamless journal entitled "By the Grace of God and the Filipino People". Accompanying it are photographs taken with a box camera and eight rolls of film.

The journal and pictures remained intact in an Air Force footlocker shipped back to his widow and only son, Damon Jr, in Georgia in 1944. There it remained undisturbed for more than 50 years, until the widow, who is still living, gave her son permission to publicise its existence and contents.

It was in contacting a New York literary agent, Mary Tahan, that Mr Gause ensured his father's odyssey would finally be unveiled. The journal opens in December 1943 when Lt Gause arrives in Manila just before his fall to the Japanese. The incredible journey really begins in April 1942, however, when, after a knifing by a prison guard, he escaped captivity and swam three miles to the island of Corregidor in Manila Bay. Corregidor, however, fell on 6 May and Gause was forced to flee once more.

Gause made it first back to Luzon, half by boat and half swimming, before washing up soon afterwards on the island of Mindoro to the south. There, in deep jungle, he met an American Army Captain, William Osborne. Together, they resolved to make it all the

way to Australia in a dilapidated 22ft boat with a diesel engine that ran, but only sporadically.

What followed was a series of incidents and visits to tiny islands along the way that makes even the story of *Papillon* seem pale. They raided a Japanese lighthouse for fuel for the engine and food, killing a Japanese sentry. Love and sex, those other vital Hollywood ingredients, also feature. "There is a love affair there," confirmed Ms Tahan, that happened during the boat journey.

One stop was at a leper colony on the island of Buganga, where an American marine engineer, suffering from the disease, helped them repair their sputtering engine. On another island, a woman missionary gave them shelter and provided Gause with the cameras and rolls and film.

Finally, 159 days after first setting sail, Gause and Osborne washed up in Wyndham, Australia, 300 miles to the southwest of Darwin. Disbelieving Australian servicemen took them in.

"Rocky" Gause became, in fact, the first genuine American hero of the war, feted in front

page articles, still available from archives, in the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

He was shipped home to Georgia where he remained just long enough to attend the birth of his son Damon Jr. He begged to be allowed back to the war, however. And, in late 1943, with his son just one day old, he found himself dispatched to the Isle of Wight and a mission to test P47s to see if they could stand up aerodynamically to being used as dive-bombers.

Incredible as the tale may be, it stands up to all scrutiny, insists Ms Tahan.

Some of those named in the journal who are still living have been contacted for their memories of Gause and his companion, Osborne. "There are several survivors who can give an eyewitness account", she said yesterday.

Ms Tahan hopes to conclude the auction soon. It cannot be long, before the full, astonishing story of Lieutenant Gause, lying today beneath the grass in Cambridge, England, becomes fully known to us all, in book form first and surely, quickly thereafter, on the silver screen.



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Clinton risks Israel's anger to woo US Arabs

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

AS President Clinton's special envoy to the Middle East arrived in Israel to prod prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu into accepting Monday's deadline, Mr Clinton was ratcheting up the pressure from Washington.

After the inconclusive London talks earlier in the week, the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, had threatened that if Mr Netanyahu would not cede land to the Palestinians, Washington could re-examine its whole Middle East policy. In appeals and veiled threats, Mr Clinton has reinforced the message that if there is no agreement, the future of the Oslo accords is question.

Over 48 hours, Mr Clinton illustrated what that could mean. On Thursday night he became the first serving President to address a gathering of Arab-Americans. To an ecstatic welcome, Mr Clinton told a dinner attended by more than 750 members of the US Arab community what was at stake.

"In almost every area of human endeavour, opportunities do not last forever," he said. "They must be seized, and I

hope this one will be... we have got to get this done." Mr Clinton's words were clearly addressed more to Israelis than Palestinians, as the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has already accepted the terms for Monday's deadline. Mr Clinton was ratcheting up the pressure from Washington.

Earlier that day it became known Hillary Clinton had spoken with approval of Palestinian statehood. She told a US-sponsored youth camp in Switzerland by satellite that "it will be in the long-term interests of the Middle East for Palestine to be a state."

A flurry of qualifications followed: it was her "personal view", her spokeswoman, Marsha Berry, said, "and US policy is unchanged". She was not reflecting any administration policy," said the White House spokesman, Mike McCurry. He denied it was "part of a calculated strategy".

But Mrs Clinton is no novice in foreign affairs (she has acted as unofficial presidential envoy on numerous occasions) and yields little to her husband in political acumen. And few were deceived. While Jewish American groups condemned her remarks, the President of the Arab-American Institute

in Washington, James Zogby, congratulated her on "helping to break the taboo".

Mr Clinton, for his part, used each and every public appearance to chivvy Mr Netanyahu into making the concession on land that would make the planned talks in Washington on Monday worthwhile. He denied Israel was facing an ultimatum: "What we are trying to do is to get the parties over a hurdle so... we can stay on the timetable established a few years ago by both the Palestinians and the Israelis to finish the whole thing by this month next year," he said.

Responding to cries of foul from sections of Congress, where the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives had accused Mr Clinton of siding with the Palestinians and "bullying" Israel, he said: "There is no way in the world I could impose an agreement on them or dictate their security to them". If Mr Clinton had to tread warily with Congress, he hardly had to apologize to the Jewish lobby outside Congress. Divided about Mr Netanyahu's policy, American Jews were largely silent, and some Jewish leaders said that they continued to support US policy.

In Washington, James Zogby, congratulated her on "helping to break the taboo".

John Joseph, Bishop of Faisalabad, who shot himself over the death sentence on a fellow Catholic who allegedly praised Salman Rushdie

The body of John Joseph, Bishop of Faisalabad, who shot himself over the death sentence on a fellow Catholic who allegedly praised Salman Rushdie

Riots at suicide bishop's memorial

Marcus Tanner on the violent feelings aroused by the self-sacrifice of a cleric who fought religious persecution

THE procession in memory of the Pakistani bishop who killed himself in protest at the sentencing to death of a fellow Catholic turned violent yesterday when police fired into a crowd of furious mourners, wounding several.

John Joseph, Bishop of Faisalabad, 150 miles from the capital, Islamabad, shot himself

long-standing, vociferous opponent of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, passed in the early Nineties under the former leader General Zia and which stipulate the death sentence

for those defiling the name of the Prophet Muhammad. They have been criticised by human rights groups as being vaguely worded and thus liable to be used to intimidate the country's small non-Muslim minority.

The clashes yesterday started after 2,000 mourners formed a procession to take the coffin to the cathedral in Faisalabad, where the funeral is to be held tomorrow. Many were chanting slogans against Zia and the religious law.

Police and mourners traded accusations over who initiated the clash. The city's police chief said his men came under attack first from a hail of stones, while the mourners said the stone-throwing started on the police side. As the police fired over and into the crowd, several mourners were hit, including a young girl shot in the stomach. The rest of the crowd fled into

the cathedral, which the police surrounded.

The clashes and the bishop's gesture of self-sacrifice are unlikely to achieve their object of forcing Pakistan to repeal its religious laws.

They are intended only to protest Islam and not oppress other faiths - according to the government.

The US yesterday repeated its call for the government to drop the case against Ayub Massih and repeal the laws.

Christians form a small, impotent community in Pakistan. Many are descendants of the poorest sections of the community who accepted the fall of European missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries and are thus open to the charge of accepting the religion of the colonial oppressor.

The object of the bishop's gesture of self-sacrifice is in jail pending an appeal, his family a target for Islamic militants. Bashirah Bibi, his mother, said her entire family had had to leave their village.

Fresh sanctions against Belgrade as crisis deepens

By Rupert Cornwell

THE escalating crisis in Kosovo was poised to dominate the discussions among the world's major powers in London which began last night, as Yugoslavia rejected international mediation in the crisis, and further sanctions were set to start against the Belgrade regime.

The formal setting was a meeting of foreign ministers ahead of next weekend's annual G8 summit, to be held in Birmingham. But the six G8 countries which make up the Contact Group - Italy, France, Germany, Britain, Russia and the United States - are convening separately to decide what further pressure to exert on President Slobodan Milosevic.

As matters stand, earlier sanctions - which include a freeze of Yugoslav foreign assets and a suspension of International Monetary Fund credits - are due to be joined today by a ban on foreign investment in Serbia, a step which the West believes could hit hard at Mr Milosevic's efforts to revive the struggling economy.

Yesterday, Belgrade for-

mally turned down a mission by the Contact Group's appointed mediator, the former Spanish prime minister Felipe Gonzalez, and the new curbs seem inevitable. Russia however will again not take part and Mr Milosevic, diplomats acknowledge, is likely to remain intransigent for a while yet. "We're going into this with our eyes open," a British diplomat said this week.

Other topics for the G8 include the Middle East, where Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, will be presenting a bleak assessment of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian talks and the delicate negotiations over the shape of the permanent international criminal court under United Nations auspices, which should be set up this summer.

Nigeria will also be on the agenda. Ministers will condemn the continuing failure of the military government in Africa's largest country to restore democracy. But they will probably also examine further sanctions, including action against Nigeria's oil exports. No final decision, however, is expected.

Pope to beatify Croatian archbishop

IN A controversial gesture, the Pope will beatify a Croatian archbishop seen as a hero to Croats but who is a hate-figure in neighbouring Serbia, writes Marcus Tanner.

Alojzije Stepinac, archbishop of Zagreb during Yugoslavia's darkest hours in the Second World War, was tried after the victory of Josip Tito's Communist partisans for supporting the Nazi-backed independent Croatian state. Under that regime, led

by the dictator Ante Pavelic, Serbs, Jews and gypsies were persecuted and tens of thousands - if not more - killed in pogroms and camps.

Most Croats thought Stepinac's trial in 1946 was a show trial and that his real crime was anti collaboration with fascists but outspoken anti-Communism. Before his death, under house arrest in 1960, he had become a virtual saint in the eyes of Croatia's Catholic majority.

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Italy declares emergency in landslide region

ITALY yesterday declared a state of emergency for the Campania region, and earmarked 50 billion lire (£18m) for patching up the worst of the damage done by landslides which killed at least 87 people earlier this week.

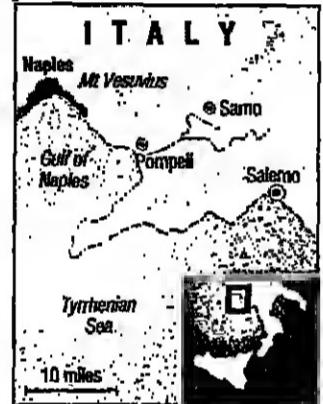
The money will go some way towards putting roofs back over the heads of the 2,000-odd people whose homes were destroyed by the massive river of mud and detritus driven by heavy rain down the mountainside into the Sarno valley. It will contribute towards the cost of reopening shops and businesses in the area.

It will not, however, even start to pay for the work necessary to prevent the many other geological disasters waiting to happen in Campania and all over Italy.

"We need 65 trillion lire over the next 10 years to get territory which has been plundered for the last 30 years back into shape," said Green party MP Anna Maria Procacci. "We need it now. The Sarno disaster marks a point of no return."

In a dossier released by the Legambiente environmental watchdog in January 1997, the Sarno valley was singled out as "a high-risk zone for environmental crises".

The river Sarno, the report



said, had dwindled to a trickle of toxic froth, the river bed had been cemented over, the clay soil of the surrounding mountains had been rendered dangerously loose by fires and deforestation, and houses had been built up hillsides which had been identified as landslide zones.

"The fact that no steps were taken to remedy this situation," said Ernesto Realiacci, Legambiente's chairman, "is hardly surprising. This is an area dominated by organised crime. In Quindici, one of the worst-affected villages, town council elections have been called off year after year because no one dares to stand against the official candidates of the Graziano clan."

The Sarno situation is the tip of a vast iceberg, which costs Italy 8 trillion lire a year to patch up as mountainsides collapse, rivers flood, and earthquakes damage buildings. In the Campania region alone, 24 per cent of territory is considered high-risk. In

sure that Italy's population is safe from natural disasters.

In Quindici, for example, they should have been using part of the funds they had on incentives for people to leave homes which now lie buried under tons of mud, he said. "I dread to think what will happen to the thousands of people living high up the slopes of Vesuvius when that volcano goes off. There's no way they can be evacuated," he added.

It is also, he said, a question of instilling pride. "I look around me and I see the ugliness we have brought to our beautiful country. It's all part of the same process. We need to teach Italians to care about the land they live on."



Rescue workers still digging yesterday after four days for those missing beneath the mud and detritus in Sarno

Photograph: Reuters



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More openness, please, Mr Cook

THE LETTER that Sandline International's lawyers sent to the Foreign Secretary a fortnight ago, and now in the public domain, seems to suggest that the official contacts with this firm of "military consultants" were much more extensive than was previously thought. Tony Lloyd, the Foreign Office minister, has "points to correct" in his evidence to MPs about the Government's role. All this raises once again the way that ministers have handled the Sierra Leone issue. Naturally any firm judgement on the behaviour of ministers and officials must await the various inquiries now under way. But we can at this stage say that even if those involved were complicit, they need not feel that they are defenceless.

Politically complex, the moral questions posed by events in Sierra Leone are straightforward: the democratically-elected government was ousted by a military dictator, and Britain appears to have covertly assisted the legitimate government in returning to power. The problem was the wording of a United Nations resolution imposing sanctions on the African country as an expression of the world's disapproval. The effect was to prevent aid going to the ousted President, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

If Britain is to run an ethical foreign policy, it should include helping restore legitimate democratic rulers where possible. But preferably without subterfuge. Mr Cook should in future try to ensure that the UN's knee-jerk reaction – an arms embargo – is tempered by the need for flexibility when dealing with genocidal, illegal regimes. He should also try more openness in his approach.

Time for change in local voting

FEWER PEOPLE turned out to vote in Thursday's local elections than in any comparable democratic contest in modern times. Obviously this is not a "good thing". But a closer examination of the evidence suggests that democracy is not quite approaching the collapse some would have us believe.

One powerful explanation for the low rate of participation lies in the "nationalisation" of local elections. In recent decades they have become an excellent vehicle for the disgruntled voter to punish an unpopular government. Politicians can't easily rubbish them as they do the opinion polls or by-elections. Unsuccessful leaders have to answer to armies of walking wounded ex-councillors. The trend became more pronounced over this decade, starting with the protest over the poll tax in 1990 which contributed to the downfall of Margaret Thatcher. Then local elections became referendums on the personal fate of John Major. Many perfectly blameless Tory councillors saw their careers end this way.

Most of the nation, however, got its protesting out of its system with the election of Tony Blair's government. Happily for him the local elections came after a fortnight of coverage about his unprecedented popularity. People registered their content with the state of national politics by simply staying at home. This is not inevitable. We can be sure that if Mr Blair had announced an Abolition of the World Cup (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill on the morning of 7 May then things might have been different.

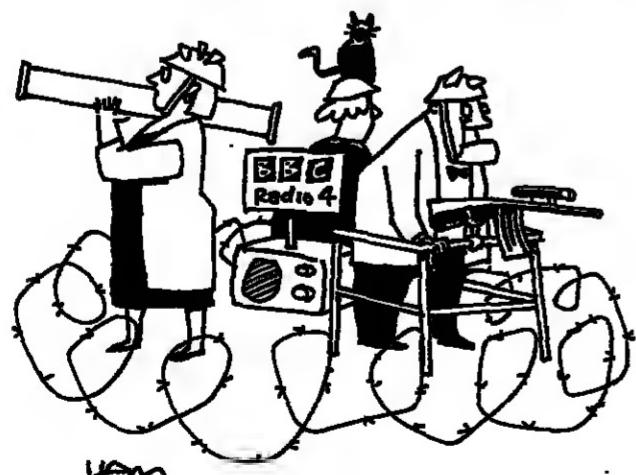
So this year, in the absence of a protest vote, and with the content majority abstaining, those who did actually bother to turn out did so for the right – local – reasons. The diverse pattern of results suggests, as Professor Anthony King observed, that these were the most "local" of local elections. Labour, for example, found itself struggling in Hackney, where it has been embroiled in a rather distasteful scandal, but making surprising progress in Harrow. The Liberal Democrats could take the lead of Sheffield Council's seat on the same night as their deputy leader on the Isle of Wight took a nasty tumble. The Conservatives were able to make up ground in Battersea whilst they lost Bromley.

This proves that it is possible for local contests to be fought on local issues. Nevertheless, turnout figures this low cannot be good for the long-term health of our democracy. The proposed reforms of local democracy and introduction of directly elected mayors will help re-invigorate local democracy. Mr Blair should speed up his reforms. He may not have much time before the protest voters return to boost the turnout figures for all the wrong reasons.

Safe new Radio 4

"SOLE LUNDY, Fastnet, Irish Sea..." As listeners, viewers and readers, we are conservative creatures. But the Radio 4 audience is the most conservative of all. They represent a sort of National Trust of the airwaves, devoted to the preservation of the fabric of broadcasting schedules. Accidental survivals from an earlier age are treated with reverence. The shipwreck forecast, the six o'clock bongs, the seagulls on Roy Plomley's desert island. Millions of domestic routines have been displaced by the shifting of *The Archers*. Millions of ears have been offended by "30 minutes of news and comment from the BBC" instead of the 40 of *The World At One*.

And yet... the surprising thing about the changes brought in by James Boyle, controller of Radio 4, is how little protest there has been. Now a



month on from the small earthquake we can add: not many hurt. This is an extraordinary achievement for Mr Boyle. Remember how the BBC was forced to back down by the Save Radio 4 Long Wave campaign in 1993? Mr Boyle does. And he prepared the ground for his frankly modest renovations of the national monument with care, pre-empting the fuss, taking the Radio 4 Roadshow to middle England and squaring the Speaker of the House of Commons over the changes to parliamentary coverage.

So what of the reforms? Some of them are good, some not so good. John Peel's programme about families on Saturday morning, for example, is excellent, but starting the news just before 9am instead of on the hour is highly irritating. Letters to the BBC's own *Feedback* are running strongly against the changes but, as ever, the contented tend not to write in. What is significant is that middle England has not marched on Broadcasting House to protest. They are sleeping safely in their beds, soothed by familiar litannies. "Rockall, Malin, Hebrides..."



'Baggy-trousered urban surfers disporting themselves on concrete shores' – the best way to un-grey Britain? (see letter below right)

Photograph: Rex Features

Middle East's tragedy

Sir: If ever a single picture epitomised the tragedy of the Middle East, Paul Hackett's portrait of Yasser Arafat (6 May) surely does.

Mr Arafat has been a tireless campaigner on behalf of his people all his life. The fullness of armed struggle against the USA's premier client state in the Middle East has been repeatedly brought home to the Palestinian community, and in Oslo the diplomatic option seemed to have paid off.

The murder of Yitzhak Rabin, the only Israeli statesman to have the courage to grasp the nettle of peace with honour, and Benjamin Netanyahu's subsequent arrogant denial of both the letter and spirit of the 1993 Oslo accords, point to one crushing, salient fact: Israel, supported by the US, can ignore the "peace process" with impunity, and is free to pursue its own agenda of accelerated settlement, the economic isolation of Palestinian territory and the acquisition of state-of-the-art military technology with which to browbeat its neighbours. If ever there was a man caught between a rock and a hard place, it is Mr Arafat.

It is big time that the likes of Robin Cook and Madeleine Albright stopped pandering to Mr Netanyahu and dismissed the "peace process" as the distraction it is while the Zionists relentlessly pursue their morbid dreams. The state of Israel has been an unmitigated and unholy disaster for the entire Middle East since its inception 50 years ago, and as protagonists in the whole débâcle we British should assume our responsibilities and take the centre of the stage.

It is time to start the healing process. Accept the fact that the Palestinians have been dispossessed of their homeland. Acknowledge the fact that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians languish in squalid refugee camps whilst Uzi-toting settlers build homes on appropriated lands.

Sadly we cannot turn back the clock and avert the Holocaust, but we must start looking for solutions in Palestine that do not simply legitimise Zionist aggrandisement and trample legitimate Palestinian aspirations. Yasser Arafat is an old, frail and unloved man in the world today, and we owe his people something to make him smile.

STEVE RAZZETTI
Hesket Newmarket, Cumbria

Why I didn't vote

Sir: My choice not to vote in the London referendum had nothing whatever to do with either apathy or complacency, but was based on the fact that, whichever answer I gave, it would convey a meaning I did not intend.

I firmly believe that London needs an overall strategy and that the present system is failing the citizens miserably. On this basis you might say I should have voted "Yes".

But I could get no satisfactory answers to questions about the proposed Mayor's accountability. The Government's documentation is deliberately vague. The White Paper summary states: "The Assembly would question the Mayor on his or her activities [and] would agree or suggest changes to the Mayor's plans". But what will happen if they don't agree or endorse the Mayor's plans? Will the Assembly be so powerless that they are just the Mayor's puppets?

The Mayor is likely to be elected on personality and charisma rather than on party political lines,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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whereas in the present political climate the Assembly will probably incline towards New Labour. If the Mayor's ideas do not reflect those of the Assembly there is potential for conflict and even stalemate.

Most people who voted "No" did so because they would end up paying out more money for bureaucracy. If I had voted "No", this would have been interpreted as meaning either that I don't want to contribute to improving London, or that I am satisfied with the way things are now – both of which are untrue.

SUSAN ESTERMANN
London NW6

Sir: Low turnout in local elections will be blamed on the polling stations being in the wrong place. It would apparently be better if they were all in supermarkets.

It couldn't be that all the main parties looked identical in most parts of the country and so there wasn't much of a choice for voters?

It couldn't be that most powers have been removed from local government and so there isn't much to vote for?

And it couldn't be that the spin-doctors want fewer elections, just for the occasional Mayor (and Prime Minister?) who can be trusted to do everything for us?

A one-stop shop indeed.
JOHN NICHOLSON
Manchester

Act now to avert famine

Sir: As an agency that has worked in Sudan for over 20 years, Cafod was deeply concerned at some of the assertions made in the article "Is there really a famine in Sudan?" (7 May).

It's all too easy to sit in London and play the numbers game, debating where a humanitarian crisis ends and a famine begins. In the meantime people are put at ever-greater risk of dying as each day passes without sufficient aid getting through to them.

We reject the claim that "famine fatigue" might set in if the crisis is highlighted before it becomes a full-blown tragedy. As Cafod has seen from the early response to our appeal, the British public is more interested in prevention and is willing to contribute to a programme that can avert disaster.

The next few weeks are crucial for the people of Sudan. After that the rains will begin and it will be very difficult to reach the people at greatest risk of starvation. However, if we can get enough food through now,

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But what will happen if they don't agree or endorse the Mayor's plans? Will the Assembly be so powerless that they are just the Mayor's puppets?

The Mayor is likely to be elected on personality and charisma rather than on party political lines,

it may be possible to sustain people until the August harvest.

Because we work with the local church structures we do not need to set up feeding centres or relief shelters, because we can reach the people in their villages. Therefore our relief work is not encouraging people to leave their homes to get food.

Cafod has received an urgent appeal from our church partners in Sudan, who have told us that people now face starvation. As a direct response we have appealed to our supporters for £1m. We believe that the public would prefer to respond now rather than wait until later in the year when there may be more deaths.

PAT JONES
*Deputy Director, Cafod
London SW9*

Nappies: a plastic peril?

Sir: Vanya Body (letter, 2 May) is to be commended even for considering using "real" nappies rather than disposables, and if she asks women old enough actually to have used the things she may get a more positive response from her contemporaries.

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It couldn

Cover me in Lycra, put me on the pitch, and – hey presto



DAVID AARONOVITCH
ON SEX, SPORT AND
THE HARD SELL

YOU MIGHT mistake it for a *Lolita* ad. The teenage girl lies on her front, wearing a skinty black off-the-shoulder shoulder, her eyes looking directly at you, and just the hint of a half-lascivious, half-scornful smile on her cherry red lips. "8.30pm," runs the accompanying text, "my place".

Mmmm. We all know what is being promised here, don't we? And it sure as hell ain't a game of hockey. Except, of course, that a game of hockey is exactly what is on offer. The girl is 18 year old England hockey international, Lucilla Wright, her "place" is a stadium in Milton Keynes, and the ad goes on (in small letters) to give details of how to obtain tickets.

It has, however, as you might expect, caused some discussion within the English Hockey Association. The EHA president, Mrs Monica Pickersgill, was initially opposed to its appearing in a local magazine, but has subsequently been talked round. Not least by a Mr Ian Thomas, the EHA's marketing director, who revealed that England's Aussie opponents in the match (the unimaginatively titled "Hockey-roos") will take to the field dressed, not in pleated skirt and aertex polo-necks, but in "all-in-one Lycra kit".

Lycra is, of course, the material that saved cycling as a spectator sport, and made men's athletics a must-watch for today's woman. Ooo a shapely and vigorous person its adaptation to the most intimate contours of the body provides a focus for spectator attention whenever the sporting action flags. Or even when it doesn't. Lycra, as we know, follows each undulation, drops into the smallest indentation, emphasises every teeny pucker, and moulds itself around the firm semi-circle of ... Whoah! That's quite enough of that. What do you think this is, *Playboy? Loaded? Hockey Monthly?* Get a grip!

If cycling and sprinting have been

succoured by sex, so has soccer. Ginnia of the pertulant lips and flowing locks has become a pin-up, as has David Beckham, he of the impossible combination of DiCaprio features and vigorous, lusty thighs. He could sire forty healthy children for you, and still look like your own son.

But some sports have an easier job than others when it comes in selling sensuality. The problem for hockey is that it is associated with tree-trunk thighs, hefty gym mistresses, painful (and, for most people, necessarily unsexual) blows to the knees and ankles, hulking-off, loud shouts of "owah heah Madge!" and women called Mrs Pickersgill.

Nevertheless that co-option of implied naughtiness is exactly what young Lucilla is after. With the brutal truthfulness of your average 18-year-old she states that her aim is to show that "normal, sexy, boy-interested girls play hockey, and you don't have to look like a horse." Lucilla's photograph, by the way, shows a most unequine set of features.

This is all very hard on the generations of women who have been horse-looking, abnormal, lesbian (or simply uninterested in boys), or whose looks have not been what social convention has declared to be "sexy" – and who have generally been the bedrock of English hockey. As an unconventionally sexy person myself – whose appearance in all-in-one Lycra would certainly stop any contest dead – I feel for them. Besides, perhaps Lucilla is too young to know this, but there are plenty of men (and not a few women) who are rather attracted to lesbians.

Well then, here it comes, the question that you all knew I was bound to ask. Which is, naturally, where will it end? Is there any sport or activity that cannot be sold on the basis of the opportunity to watch fine young bodies deport themselves around in a fine pheromonal mist? And is there any limit to how sports will exploit the sex appeal of competitors?

It might be hard, for instance, to stoke up smouldering passions about the leading practitioners of the sport of darts. Dressing the *Jocky Wilsons* in skin-tight gear is out going in, fml – paradoxically – the larger the undulation, the less the desire to encounter it in detail. And besides, they wouldn't have anywhere to put their Woodbines.

The Winter Olympics proved that curling has a similar rebranding problem (although sledging, with all that lying down and burling round corners, doesn't). Will the British Curling Association sanctify naked men or women sitting astride those flat sliding things (or stools, as they are known), as they slip slowly – oh, so slowly – over the cold ice? I think not.

Mind you, at the '96 Olympic Games, Belarusian gymnast Svetlana Boginskaya was nicknamed "the mix from Minsk" for her interesting floor exercise, as she writhed and wriggled in an apparent ecstasy of something or other. Any sport that includes music and routines is ripe for exploitation.

My own choices for a successful revamp would be Dressage and Showjumping. Horseyness might be thought to look unglamorous on a hockey player, but it looks pretty good on a horse. Place upon the back of that magnificent animal a young woman, clad only in knee length black leather boots and strategically placed ringlets, and then allow her to brandish a riding crop and a snarl, and I think you have a sport that one might just go to Milton Keynes for.

If cycling and sprinting have been

Reading the runes of the London referendum



TREVOR PHILLIPS
WHAT A MAYOR SHOULD KNOW

LET'S NOT be too hard on the voters. Instead of excoriating them for being apathetic and ill-educated, perhaps we should try to hear the message they are sending us.

Elections and referendums are not just a choice offered from on high, they are a chance for the people to answer back. The low turnouts around the country in Thursday's local elections are being treated as though they reveal some great new mystery. They don't. It is only a year since nearly seven out of ten turned out to vote for a new government. Many people clearly believed that they had already done the job and saw no need to do it again. But there

is a deeper, rather dangerous argument being made: did the voters really know what they are doing?

On election night much attention was drawn to the high level of spoil votes in the referendum for a Greater London Authority. I have already heard the discussions on the need for political education on the radio. Forget it; most of those voted and many of those who stayed away knew very well what they were doing, and they clearly appointed two rather telling weaknesses in Britain's local government. First it is not local. Second, it is seldom given the chance to govern.

Such a majority is the kind of plurality that most dictators dream of having. More than a

Londoners were so sure there would be a majority they saw no need to vote

million people voted "Yes", and the London turnout was 8 nr 9 per cent higher than elsewhere in the country. To put another way, the effect of the Mayoral referendum was to bring out four voters in London for every three elsewhere. If that happened in a General Election we would be marvelling at a turnout in the capital of some 90 per cent.

And isn't it curious that though the London result produced a similar level of backing to that for the Welsh Assembly,

London is, as ever, expected to do something more spectacular?

The truth is that once all the political parties had been persuaded to see sense (as they say in the *Cosa Nostra*), Londoners were so certain that there would be a majority for a mayor or that they saw no need to vote

As for apathy, it may be a small piece of evidence, but I found that in a short walk in central London yesterday lunchtime, I was stopped no less than twelve times by passers-by, asking me how I thought the

vote had gone. I may have been on TV, but I don't flatter myself that I am anywhere as recognisable as, say Jeffrey Archer or Ken Livingstone. The only explanation I can offer is that the shoppers, plumbers and taxi-drivers had a firm enough grip on the campaign to recognise one of its more obscure figures.

There is another lesson to be learnt, which I think will become clearer as the votes are analysed more thoroughly. In the London referendum the level of the "Yes" vote varied from a low of

57 per cent in Bromley (the borough which started the whole controversy over London government back in the early eighties by torpedoing the GLC's fares policy in the courts) up to 83.8 per cent in Haringey.

It would be easy to explain this away as a contrast between Tory and Labour strongholds, but that would not explain the low "Yes" vote in leftist Haringey, and the relatively high level of support – 74 per cent – in the Tory flagship Wandsworth. Nor is the division simply inner and outer London, as the figures vary widely in both cases.

A far more reliable indicator of enthusiasm is evident if you list the top six "Yes" votes – Lambeth, Haringey, Camden, Hackney, Islington and Newham. These are all boroughs with large concentrations of poor ethnic minority voters. The conclusion I draw is that people who for decades have seen local government fail to reflect the diversity of their communities are ready to invest hope in this new idea.

As the parties now start to go about the serious business of selecting their candidates for the assembly and the Mayoralty, they would be foolish to ignore the fact that one-in-three voters will come from minority communities. Labour especially

may find that if it wins nearly half its votes are cast by minority hands.

If the new authority is not to fail it must be genuinely new. It will probably be two years before we know the personalities who will form the new leadership of London. Luckily for me, as an interviewer, I will have the chance to hold the politicians' feet to the fire for the next year or so, in order to ensure that the proposals are not neutered as they go through parliament. This will be great sport, but there are serious questions still to be tackled about the legislation.

It has to deliver decisive, powerful city government, untrammelled by old allegiances and machine politics. The new mayor and assembly should be the sort of outfit that lets everyone in the capital feel they have a place at the governing table. This referendum was not a jib creation scheme for a bunch of middle-aged blokes whose principal qualification is that they've done something like this before. If they truly believe in London, they will step aside and allow the emergence of a new breed who feel and look like London. If not they will have to be pushed aside. And that, my friends, could be the most vicious, and therefore, entertaining, battle of all.

Why rock chicks are no longer under the thumb of any guy



GLENDA COOPER
CHARTS THE CHANGES



Facing off: Alanis Morissette and Mick Jagger

Photomontage photographs: LFI (left) and AP

In His Satires, Juvenal said, "There is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman." Today most men would add, "There is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman who is a successful rock star."

A new survey reveals that the five most popular albums of the 1990s are all by women. Whitney Houston leads the list with *Bodyguard*, which has sold 30 million copies, followed by Celine Dion, Mariah Carey, Alanis Morissette and the Spice Girls.

Michael Jackson also limps in at joint Number Five but theo on one can really remember what his gender is. So where are the real men? Where is Oasis in this list? Or George Michael? Or Eric Clapton? Or any other of the greats of male rock? Squashed beneath a Spice Girl's trainer,

The boys had to be hopping mad. Because the thing about rock is that it's a man's thing. You strut around with a phallic guitar, waiting for groupies to fall to their knees, and yell about chicks and sex and drugs.

It's as George Harrison this week described the early days of the Beatles: "a lot of teenagers getting drunk playing rock 'n' roll ... That's how it was. It was just a wild thing," he said. "But by 2am on Saturday it was just hell."

Not that they nudged the Rolling Stones. When Mick and Keith weren't being crushed like butterflies no a whale or over-indulging in every way possible, they were busy penning songs about squirming bitches "under my thumb". The message was simple: rock is loud, it's macho, it's

prima facie to hear women gushing about how special their man was. Or there was another hit the Crystals had the same year – *He Hit Me And I Told Like A Kiss*. "He hit me and I knew he loved me. If he didn't care for me I could never have made him mad. But he hit me and I was glad."

Of course there were women who didn't fit in – Janis Joplin or Tina Turner. Carly Simon may have got her revenge on Warreng Beatty with *You're So Vain*. But then women singers always had burdens to carry – Tina had been beaten up and controlled by Ike, and

Janis died of a drug overdose, and now Carly has revealed she's fighting breast cancer. They may have been raunchy and they may have seemed strong, but underneath it all they were a mass of pain. See, girls that's what happens if you try to go it alone.

Rock has always been misogynistic and violent with it. And it's not limited to the decades before feminism kicked in. "I've always enjoyed writing songs about dead women," said the post-punk singer Nick Cave. Think about rappers talking endlessly about "bitches" and "hos". Or Prodigy and their tasteless *Smack My Bitch Up*. (Surprising how many women didn't get the supposed irony.) And that grand-daddy

of rock himself Eric Clapton is trouble recently for his latest tune *Sick and Tired* which apes, "Get me a shotgun baby... I may have to blow your brains out, baby... Then you won't have to bother me no more."

The boys had it all their own way for too long, but then they went off in two directions.

Either they still insisted on drinking too much, having scantily clad chicks in their videos and indulging in groin threatening antics on stage, causing Donna Gaines in her 1991 book *Teenage Wasteland* to remark, "Metal is romanticised whining."

A woman's place in the music industry was to be the adoring rock chick ready and waiting by the stage

Very scared. They didn't like Alanis Morissette warning them: "When I scratch my nails down someone else's back/I hope you feel it". They didn't like that, but what they really hated was Jagger Little Pil selling 23 million copies.

So while the men were feeling sorry for themselves the women started to break through, in the footsteps of such feisty predecessors as Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell. The Eighties women were led by Madonna, of course, who reinvented herself so many times that her male critics were always one step behind when trying to catalogue her.

The much-maligned Girl Power is on the increase. The women on the lists do not conform to some feminist ideal nor are they writing protest songs. But they're knocking the boys' macho efforts into the ground. And women – and men – are buying female artists in their millions. The boys have been left behind.

Everyone laughed indulgently last year at the Brit Awards when Spice Girl Mel C reacted to Liam Gallagher's revelation that he stayed away from the Brits because he was afraid he would "chin" the Spice Girls if he met them there. "Liam," she jeered. "Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!" We may have laughed at Sporty then. Few would give much for Liam's chances now.

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It's no joke being a cartoonist

Martin Plimmer on a special festival devoted to the art world's mavericks

IN AT LEAST one respect, the cartoonist is God. He can make people's noses as big as he fancies. In every other way he is not so elevated.

There can be few people with lower status than him – it is nearly always a him. Unless the cartoonist is fortunate enough to be one of a tiny élite contracted to work for a national newspaper, he exists on the bottom rung of the media earnings ladder.

Newspapers don't devote so much space to cartoons any more and are less interested in the quality of the draughtsmanship than the gag. The cartoonists sit at home all day staring at the wall, alternately barking with laughter and howling with despair, working up topical jokes, which he faxes in batches to newspapers in the hope that, should a hole happen to arise in an editorial layout, one of his cartoons will be plucked from a huge pile of similar, unsolicited submissions.

Then his masterpiece will be shrunk to fit a tiny space, and he will receive from £40 to slightly over £100. The highest rates are paid by *Private Eye* and *Punch*, for whom the cartoon is much more than a filler. *Punch* uses 20 to 30 cartoons a week which threaten to sink cartoon editor Steve Way's desk. He gets 700 a week, but the number keeps on growing. "It's one of those things a lot of people think they can do and while it's relatively easy to make some money, it's very difficult to make a career of it. You've got to sell four or five to make a reasonable weekly wage and to achieve that you've got

to do 30 or 40 drawings. You've got to be a very good cartoonist to earn more than £6,000 a year. It's that hard."

We don't value our cartoonists – we don't even have a cartoon museum. But it also has a lot to do with the cartoonist's habit of looking sideways at people and laughing quietly to himself. He is the dysfunctional brother of the stand-up comedian (whose ability to repeat his jokes he envies).

This cloak of anonymity will be cast aside tomorrow at *Cartoon '98*, a celebration of cartoonists' art at Chelsea Town Hall, London. Those being touted include Michael Heath, Caroline Holden, Chris Riddell, Geoff Thompson, Giles Pilkington and Colin Wheeler.



The joker: fantasy and the reality

Cartoons: B Kliban

"It's an attempt to raise the status of cartoons," says Duncan McCoshan whose home-made magazine, *The Journal of Silly*, is organising the day together with the Cartoon Arts Trust. There will be stalls selling original drawings, displays by caricaturists and children's workshops.

The illustration on the poster for the event is of a man shooting his shadow with a gun. That won't put anyone off. As every cartoonist knows, angst is funny.

Real live horror show

Sarah Kane's new play, 'Cleansed', will shock theatre-goers, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be shown. By David Benedict

FOR BETTER or worse, the spell of most plays drifts off the moment you leave the theatre. Not Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*.

Hard as you try, its compelling, horror-soaked atmosphere refuses to be shaken off. It clings to you like a shroud.

This is hardly surprising in a play which painstakingly charts the descent into the brutality of a world which seeks to deny the power of positive emotion. Its catalogue of cruelties has already been accused of being irresponsibly shocking but the real shock is how powerfully the vivid images resound in your imagination for ages afterwards.

The hullabaloo that greeted Kane's Royal Court debut, *Blasted*, in 1995, catapulted her from nowhere to notoriety in a single night. Broadcast news papers, and tabloids who didn't even have a theatre critic, cleared pages to denounce the "atrocities" on display. Theatre hadn't seen such scandal since Mary Whitehouse tried to sue the National for the simulated rape in *The Romans in Britain* 15 years earlier, a scene which resembled *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* in comparison.

Kane's return to the Court revisits extreme violence. Grace (Suzan Sylvester) visits a nameless institution to reclaim the clothes of her beloved brother Rod, another man, is systematically robbed of all means of human expression over successive scenes. Beaten up by unseen hands, he is then raped by an (invisible) metal pole, his tongue is cut out, his hands and then feet are cut away in sight of his lover. It may seem excessive but Kane is dealing with authoritarian violence, hardly the stuff of discretion and politeness.

But Kane refuses to spoon-feed her audience with anything as comforting as a straightforward detective narrative. Instead she presents us with 20 measured scenes set within this fascist institution designed to rid society of its "undesirables", in which torture and punishment are mercilessly and methodically meted out to a desperate

group of people struggling to save themselves through love.

At one particularly tender moment, Grace tries to teach Robin, an educationally subnormal boy, to read and write. Trying to draw her name so that the image corresponds to the sound of the word, he asks her for a pink crayon. Grace insists: "It's not about colour, colour doesn't come into it." To a degree, that sums up Kane's world view. For her, nearly everything is black and white, with few shades of grey. Learning that she was a fervent, born-again Christian until the age of 17 comes as no surprise when faced with the complete conviction of her writing: there is no room for doubt.

The writing has an almost unparalleled distilled intensity which is often unbearable to watch. Whether flinching or

much contemporary dialogue-driven young writing look limply unambitious.

She is also an extremely strict writer. As in the work of Edward Bond (a major influence), her stage directions demand the apparently impossible, from the severing of limbs to burning a library of books to shattering a wall with blood and gunfire. As her own production of her translation of *Phaedra's Love* proved (an event which forced many of her critics to recant), she is an extraordinarily affecting portrayal of a boy lost in hope, but several of the other roles are fatally underwritten. Stuart McQuarrie tries to lend depth to the torturer but the role leaves him straitjacketed.

But here, as in *Blasted*, she has the immense good fortune to have a director with a similarly exacting dramatic mind. James Macdonald's production has a quite terrifying sense of purpose.

It is impossible to say where Jeremy Herbert's design stops and Macdonald's direction takes

tancing degree of stylisation. The pain would be unbearable. Yet the night I saw it, nobody left.

The precision of the staging may be beautiful but even that can not disguise clear weaknesses in the writing. With his shaved head looking lost and vulnerable nodding over his gangly body, Daniel Evans is a vision of innocence as Robin. The scene where he discovers an abacus and carefully counts out his days, building to his desperately sad suicide, is an extraordinarily affecting portrayal of a boy lost in hope, but several of the other roles are fatally underwritten. Stuart McQuarrie tries to lend depth to the torturer but the role leaves him straitjacketed.

The spare dialogue strives to pare the emotions to the hone but Kane's rigour overtakes her. The moments of pure goodness – the warmth of sunlight or the sudden appearance of upon row upon row of daffodils – are there to counterbalance the horrors of a society which kills love, but they don't resonate as strongly as she wills them to. There are flashes of humour (which the audience feasts upon like manna in the wilderness) but they are few and far between, and too often she tips the balance too far, which leaves her straining to achieve further effect.

Cleansed is no means an unmitigated success, but the duty of all new-writing theatres is to honour the vision of its playwrights. To reach maturity, as Kane surely will, it is essential their work be staged. An unperformed text remains unfinished. This fiercely powerful realisation of a profoundly dystopian vision is one of the most disturbing productions you will ever see. To some it will be repellent. Others will recognise it as absolute proof of the power of live theatre.

Cleansed is at the Royal Court Theatre downstairs, London WC2 (0171 565 5000).



SHOCK! OUTRAGE! ENCORE!

"Shock and horror tactics in the theatre have an honourable tradition from the Greeks and Jacobean through to James Bond. Kane may want to be a Bad Girl, but she also shows enormous promise."

Michael Cowen,
Daily Mail

"Sarah Kane clearly thinks that she is a serious writer with important things to say. What saddens me is that the Royal Court encourages her in this delusion, in what looks like a cynical attempt to retain its reputation for controversial cutting-edge theatre. In fact, the play is a deadly, entirely predictable bore."

Charles Spencer,
Daily Telegraph

"She is not the gloating opportunist that some reviewers of *Blasted* thought; she has, I feel, no less integrity than Pinter or Bond; but, God knows, I would hate to live in her head."

Benedict Nightingale,
The Times

ROBERT HANKS' WEEK IN RADIO

THERE are more things in heaven and earth, correct me if I'm wrong, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. In an edition of the science programme

Frontiers, entitled "Some of Our Universe Is Missing" (Radio 4, Wednesday), the tag turned out to have a gratifyingly literal application.

Peter Evans talked to a number of scientists about "dark matter", the really heavy, black stuff which, according to the best calculations, is floating around, invisibly, somewhere in the universe.

The argument goes like this: it seems clear that there must be an awful lot of gravity holding the whirling cosmos together. And since gravity goes along with mass, we can have a pretty good stab at the mass of the universe. But when we compare that calculation with the amount of stuff we can see, it seems that we can only account for about 10 per cent of that mass. So there must be vast quantities of invisible stuff to make up the difference.

This opening section was presented with admirable clarity; after that, though, despite his best efforts and those of the

scientists interviewed, clarity broke down somewhat. This is not an area in which clarity is entirely possible.

The fascinating part of the programme came at the end, where scientists suggested alternatives to dark matter: perhaps we're wrong to assume that space is a simple, empty thing, and the effects we attribute to dark matter are just space doing what it does. Or perhaps we need to scrap all our physics and begin again from first principles.

Most scientists, understandably, were unhappy with this idea, but one or two were tickled. That line about more things on heaven and earth is a cliché beloved of the *X-Files* fan, but really, it is science's own motto – an acknowledgement that it doesn't know all the answers and shouldn't claim to.

In the same week, however, we had a depressing example of the thoroughly unscientific, in the shape of *Sleuths* (Radio 4, Tuesday). This series ended with a look at Keith Wright, a detective with the Metropolitan Police who moonlights as a clairvoyant. Wright, himself, had no time for

scientific justifications, he just "knew" that his psychic powers worked, and backed his knowledge up with some vague anecdotal evidence.

More worrying, though, was the thoroughly uncritical tone

of the programme, taking all his claims at face value and giving him airtime to counter every attack. What is the point of broadcasting science programmes when you undermine them with superstitious tosh?

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Tuesday afternoon, 12 May 4.02 – 4.30.

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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Scenes from a torture chamber: Carl's hands are cut off (left) because of his love for a man; Tinker forcibly injects a hysterical Grace, while Robin looks on (below). Photograph: Robbie Jack

Miracle? What miracle?

Headlines about cancer 'cures' are no comfort for people who are fighting the disease, writes Ann Treneman

THERE are three things you can count on when it comes to news about cancer. The first is that the word "hope" will be in the headline and the second is that the word "breakthrough" will be in the first sentence. The third is that neither are probably true on the day in question.

So it has been with this week's "Hopes for Cancer Cure" headlines. The story that came out of Boston via the *New York Times* said that scientists want to start human trials with two "breakthrough" drugs that have been shown to eradicate all tumours in mice. The reports said trials may start "soon" but that seems to mean within a year. The cure itself is at least two years away.

One in three of us will get a form of the disease, so anything that hints of cure is new. But the drug companies have an interest here too. The mere suggestion that the Boston scientists wanted to start human trials saw the company which plans to market the drug increase its share value by \$71 in \$83 on the day of the report.

But what of the cancer sufferers? How do they react to the revelations of serial breakthroughs? Others see salvation and it's only human to think that somewhere between the lines lies the very cure for their cancer. The day after a cancer makes the news, the phones never stop ringing at Britain's 600 cancer charities. But perhaps a more common reaction is anger. As breast cancer survivor Gillian Hudson says: "It's all so simplified. Nothing in life is that simple."

Here is how she and two others with cancer reacted to the latest breakthrough news.



GILLIAN HUDSON

Aged 37, of Carshalton in Surrey, she was diagnosed last May with breast cancer. She had a partial mastectomy and did not have to have any radiotherapy or chemotherapy. She attends a support group at the Royal Marsden hospital.

very upsetting. The papers had said that she had beaten breast cancer but she obviously hadn't.

"Nobody really beats breast cancer, you live with breast cancer and it's a matter of how long you live with it."

"People had thought that if Linda McCartney could beat it, they could too. And then you read that she's died. Very distressing."

"I wish it were that they would discover a drug that would kill all cancers, but it doesn't work like that."

"They should report more realistically. The actual articles are balanced but a lot of people just take on board the headline."

"It's like my niece called me up and she said: 'Oh isn't it wonderful about that new drug. That means you'll be all right now! I didn't have the heart to tell her: 'No it doesn't actually.'

The death of Linda McCartney was quite a horrific time for anybody with breast cancer. I've spoken to the people in my support group, and we all found, it

GILES TRENTHAM

The 52-year-old businessman, from Oxfordshire, was diagnosed with colon cancer last spring and underwent surgery, chemotherapy and a course at the Bristol Cancer Help Centre. The cancer has now spread to his liver and he has been told he has two months to live.

"I pursue all of the stories. I've been told that they can't do much for me in the conventional sense, so I am much more open to looking at other things. I went out to Italy for a week about three weeks ago to pursue this Professor Luigi di Bella who claims to have cured tens of thousands of patients. There have been lots of articles on him."

"We've probably looked quite seriously at 10 alternative treatments. We looked at a Russian therapy to do with using a protein in the umbilical cord but I was told it was \$200,000 just to walk in the door."

"I heard about the news this week when a friend faxed me the article from the *New York Times*. I woke up and there was a seven page fax. She's a very old friend and she said: 'Giles, don't give up hope. Stay alive for a year because you never know, this just might work!' Another friend is trying to see if there is any chance that I can get on the clinical trials."

"The way I handle these stories is to try and go into action on it fast and then sort of leave it. I have to live very much in the present. I think my chances of getting well are much more than my chances of having some miracle cure in two years, so it doesn't really bother me, but it does interest me hugely."

JOHN DIAMOND

*The media commentator and *Times* columnist has written extensively about what it is like to have throat cancer. His book "C - Because Cowards Get Cancer Too" is out next month.*

"I really did think that the press knew better by now than to run 'miracle cure for cancer' stories. How did I feel? My heart skipped a beat. I stopped what I was doing and sat down on the stairs and worked my way through the papers. What I wanted to read was that all my doctors had to do was to keep me going long enough to be around when the miracle is proven – even though I knew there is no possibility of this. Not because my doctors can't keep me going but because however high the share price rises to, no drug can do what

the press claim for this drug. I admit that this is a difficult one for the press to deal with. 'New drug based on old theory at some time in the future treat certain sorts of cancer' isn't the snappiest headline in the world."

"One of the real problems is not simply that people's hopes are raised unrealistically but that the NHS has to waste precious resources dealing with those hopes. The day after GPs surgeries around the land are filled with patients pleading for the new 'treatment'. In fact one GP spoke to last time such a story broke said that what often happens is that the cancer patient's spouse or parent turns up for treatment for some minor illness – it's this splinter doctor; I think it's going to be – and after the doctor has dealt with that pleads for the new treatment".

Cancer:
the lab report

Fighting on:
Trentham has been told he has two months to live after cancer spread to his liver.
Photograph: John Lawrence

Glutathione S-transferase (GST)

What it does: It's an enzyme that, in mice, seems to help cells to detoxify themselves. **Who gets the money:** The Imperial Cancer Research Fund and Cancer Research Campaign, which are funding the research. **Next step:** To understand what GST does, and whether it has a direct human analogue. **Supporters say:** "A single gene could be profoundly important in protecting us against cancer" – Prof Roland Wolf, University of Dundee.

Other views: "My concern is that the importance of the work and what we are trying to say is taken out of context" – Professor Wolf again (after widespread press coverage).

Endostatin and angiostatin.

What they do: Apparently, these proteins are secreted by tumours to stop other tumours growing.

Who gets the money: Entremed, based in Rockville, Maryland.

Next step: tests on humans. **Supporters say:** "The most exciting cancer research in my lifetime" – James Watson, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA.

Other views: "The history of cancer research is littered with promised treatments that raise hopes, only for them to be dashed when the treatments were put to the test in humans" – James Watson (again), in a letter to the *New York Times*.

MDB, a drug cocktail of the growth hormone somatostatin, and retinoid, a vitamin A drug.

What it does: Supposedly encourages healthy cells to multiply.

Who gets the money: Dr di Bella, 86, charges £200 a day for his treatment.

Next step: "Blind" tests, due to end in June. **Supporters say:** "The drugs I use are toxic ... the patient does not suffer the side-effects of sickness, tiredness and loss of hair" – Dr di Bella.

Other views: "Conventional medicine cures four out of 10 people of cancer. Who can blame the other six for looking for an alternative solution?" – Professor Gordon McVie, Cancer Research Campaign.

Frogspawn
What it does: nobody's sure.
Who gets the money: Dundee University.
Next step: Carry out research for five years.
Supporters say: "By learning about problem cells we hope we may be able to develop treatments that prevent cells becoming malignant" – Dr Julian Blow, team head.
Others say: it's far, far too soon to say.

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strictly
off the
record."

JG RADIO
DIFFERENT

Sir Alan Glyn

IT IS a great mistake to haunt the corridors of the Commons and of the Palace of Westminster too long. I fear that most current members of the House will remember Alan Glyn as a creaky, occasionally cantankerous old buffer. This is a pity.

The Alan Glyn whom I first knew as MP for Clapham in the early 1960s, and later in his first decade as MP for Windsor, was shrewd, interesting, witty, sardonic, well-informed with first-hand information and a delightful companion on all-party parliamentary visits. He was an observer of the spread of Communism across the international scene and had personal experience of many of the trouble spots of the post-war world. That he was able to travel at personal expense, beholden to no one, made his impressions and insights the more valuable.

Glyn was then a potentially considerable member of the House of Commons as a London MP; later to be personally anointed by the austere and heavyweight Sir Charles Mott-Radiciffe as his successor in the safe Tory Windsor constituency.

Mott-Radiciffe – who was the captain of the House of Commons cricket team – told me in 1969 that Alan Glyn was "an excellent all-rounder" in both cricketing and non-cricketing terms.

Alan Glyn was born in London, the son of a barrister, John Paul Glyn, who had been an officer in the Royal Horse Guards – later one of his son's many credentials as representative of Combermere Barracks and all that goes with the Household Cavalry and Windsor. Glyn's association with the Blues was to be lifelong, even after he retired as an honorary major in 1967. His mother, Margaret Johnston, came from a distinguished Edinburgh legal family.

After Westminster he read Natural Sciences at Caius College, Cambridge. He was taught by Joseph Needham, later to be a Companion of Honour and Master of the college, but famous as the historian of Chinese science. Glyn told me that, though his political views were

at the other end of any spectrum from those of Joe Needham, it was Needham who had first interested him in the Far East.

At the outbreak of war Glyn enlisted as a trooper in his father's old regiment and was commissioned in 1940. He volunteered for service in the Far East, having graduated at Staff College, and went to India and Burma in 1942; he was demobilised as a Brigade Major in 1946.

Resuming his medical studies he qualified in 1948 and went into general practice. As a doctor he had a favourable reputation and was certainly held in the highest esteem by colleagues of all parties in the House of Commons. In the 1960s and 1970s anyone who became ill in the Palace of Westminster was treated by Dr Barnett Stross, Dr Maurice Miller, Dr David Owen, Dr David Kerr or any other doctor MP who could be found. Alan Glyn excelled in such fraught situations; he was good at diagnosis, nothing too much trouble.

Having also qualified in law, Glyn was chosen for Clapham, partly by virtue of the impression which he had made as a co-opted member of the old London County Council education committee. He was elected by a majority of 22,266 in the 20,390 of the sitting Labour member, Charles Gibson, in 1959, losing his seat by 556 votes to Mrs Margaret McKay in 1964.

In his maiden speech on 10 February 1960 he described how he had been in Hungary at a crucial moment in world history: I am influenced, I must confess, in my approach to foreign affairs by the events of 1956. At that time, I was fortunate – or unfortunate – enough to be in Hungary during the revolution. I witnessed the Russian armies invading that country, in contravention to a treaty and an agreement which had been made only three days previously by which the Russians guaranteed that they would leave Hungary and never invade it again.

As I journeyed from Hungary towards Romania, I saw the Russian armies advancing from Russia. It occurred to me then, and it has occurred to me ever since, that there was nothing in Europe at that time in the way of conventional forces which could possibly have stopped those armies proceeding westwards through Aus-



Well-informed: Glyn in a US personnel carrier on patrol in Vietnam

tra and right through Europe. There was only one factor which could stop them and that was the fear of the atomic deterrent. I am quite convinced that that was the factor which deterred them.

Glyn was a champion of the possession of nuclear weapons, but not an unthinking one. When he lost his seat in 1964, he made excellent use of his absence from the Commons by going, as a war correspondent, to Vietnam. He wrote *Witness to Viet Nam: the containment of Communism in South-East Asia*, published in 1968, in which he addressed with perception key questions of the day. How did the war start? Who were the Vietnamese? How was it that the struggle between such unequally armed combatants, the United States on one hand, and the ill-armed guerrillas on the other, was lasting so long? He was among the first to predict the terrible consequences for Laos and Cambodia.

On his return he told George Scott of the BBC Home Service *Ten O'Clock Programme*,

It can't be solved by war alone, this is quite clear. It will have to be solved by... beating the Vietcong militarily, but at the same time you have got to produce three essential things for the people of Vietnam. First of all, you have got to give them security from attack by the Vietcong; secondly, you have got to be able to produce a better standard of living than that which is offered by the Communists; and lastly you have got to give them the feeling that they can go about their business, tend their fields, in liberty and freedom, and live a normal family life not any different from any other community in the world.

When Glyn returned to the Commons his first speech was on 9 December 1970 when he gave us first-hand experience not only of Vietnam but of China, Algeria, Fidel Castro's Cuba, Cyprus, the West Bank and many other areas to which he had been.

Crucial to Glyn was the support of his feisty and charming wife of whom he used repeatedly to say, "When I went anywhere dangerous, Rosula would tell me, 'If you really must, get killed. But for pity's sake, whatever you do, do not get yourself

taken prisoner and cause complications for all of us.'"

In the early days of his parliamentary return it was a sadness to him that his experience could not have been put to use on the front bench of either the Foreign Office or the Ministry of Defence. However, whatever his unfulfilled ambitions, Glyn was an assiduous Member – "most conscientious attorney," in the words of Michael Jopling, "even when he was a far-from-well man" – who would go to enormous trouble to make sure that he voted to support his party in government whenever they needed him. Service was his yardstick.

TOM DALYELL

Alan Glyn, journalist, physician, lawyer and politician; born London 26 September 1918; called to the Bar, Middle Temple 1935; MP (Conservative) for Clapham 1959-64; for Windsor 1970-74, for Windsor and Maidenhead 1974-92; Kt 1990; married 1962 Lady Rosula Windsor Clive (two daughters); died London 5 May 1998.

Professor Myres McDougal

INTERNATIONAL law is not about neutral rules which states apply or ignore as power politics dictate. It is a particular form of authoritative decision-making, operating where power and authority coincide, and unashamedly directed towards the achievement of very precisely defined goals which necessarily are not value-free. This, in essence, is the policy science approach to international law, formulated by Myres McDougal in the 1950s and 1960s with the political scientist Harold Lasswell and elaborated and applied over the years with a variety of associates.

The ideas underlying the policy science, or "Yale Law School", approach to international law were of themselves challenging and controversial. They were made the more so by the powerful and combative style with which McDougal advanced them, whether orally or in writing. In the 1960s and 1970s it had only to be suggested that he would intervene at an international law meeting – whether at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, or the American Society of International Law in Washington – for the hall to be filled to overflowing by those who relished the battle that was bound to follow, as McDougal turned his gun on the opposition.

The opposition ranged from the "realpolitik" critics of international law (such as Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan), to those who insisted upon the traditional virtue of rules and neutrality (such as Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice), and to those who accepted the relevance of policy but rejected the need for a rigorous methodology for its application (such as Wolfgang Friedmann).

McDougal's pugnacious

style on matters legal was matched by Southern courtesy on matters personal. He was adored by his students and respected and liked even by those who profoundly disagreed with him. Knocking on the door of his office at Yale Law School one would hear the shouted command "Come!" (never "Come in"). When one had entered the room, an imposing figure wearing a green eye visor could eventually be discerned among the thousands of books which filled all available space. No student ever felt rushed. Indeed, the lucky ones might be invited to the Graduate Club to continue the discussion over dinner.

He was an inspired teacher whose deeply original ideas have irreversibly altered the way we think about international law. No international lawyer of the last 50 years has been so much written about by others. McDougal was also an intensely loyal man – those of whom he approved continued to receive his vigorous support over the years.

McDougal's output was prodigious. He constantly battled against failing eyesight, but, with his eye visor, huge magnifying glass and carefully selected younger associates, kept the problem at bay. He began his legal writing in the field of property law, before turning to international law, and specifically

to jurisprudence, the law of the seas, treaty law, space law, human rights, legal education and the use of force. *Law and Minimum World Public Order* (written with Florentino Feliciano, 1961) and "Theories About International Law: prologue to a configurative jurisprudence" (written with Lasswell and Michael Reisman, in the *Virginia Journal of International Law*, 1968) are two outstanding, and typical, examples.

It was necessary to find a vocabulary to express his perception of international law as a dynamic process available to a variety of international actors to achieve specified social goals. The old vocabulary wouldn't do, because the terms themselves often represented the expression of ideas that McDougal believed misconceived. In truth, his vocabulary was comprehensible with a minimum of effort.

What undoubtedly did make his work less accessible, from the stylistic point of view, was the heavily methodological superstructure. People were keen to read his views on, for example, treaties or the high seas; they did not want to have to plough through pages on the process of authoritative decision, the various authority functions, strategies, etc. But McDougal believed that only adherence to the methodology would lead to the correct analysis.

Accessibility aside, the substance of his work generated enormous interest and considerable controversy. It was fiercely attacked by those who believed that the methodology on which it was based was so open textured that it would allow of any result at all, whereas "law" has to be determinate. His critics also contended that the policy science approach too often served to promote US interests, which were dignified as "community values" to which decision-making should be directed.

This perception was confirmed in their eyes by the robust support McDougal gave to the action of the US administration in such matters as the intervention in Grenada and support to the Contras in Nicaragua. But his objectives were far from traditionally conservative. Senator Eastland (Democrat, Mississippi) said in reference to McDougal's views on the UN Charter: "Mr McDougal was a schoolmate of mine. He is a very distinguished professor at Yale University, and I think a very misguided liberal." He campaigned for US ratification of human rights treaties; for the Ibo cause in Nigeria; for sanctions in Southern Rhodesia; for women's rights; for pluralism.

He thought of himself as an unreconstructed Southerner: an American patriot; an Oxford man; a Rhodes scholar as a young man, nothing gave him keener pleasure than his honorary fellowship in 1982 of his old college, St John's.

Rosalyn Higgins

Myres Smith McDougal, international lawyer, legal philosopher and educationalist; born Burtons, Mississippi 23 November 1906; Sterling Professor of International Law, Yale Law School 1958-75 (Emeritus); married 1933 Frances Lee (one son); died New Haven, Connecticut 7 May 1998.

R. B. Beare



Beare: equable

R. B. BEARE was a third generation in the family firm of violin dealers. The original firm of Beare, Goodwin – the first ever wholesaler of musical instruments in Britain – was established by his grandfather John Beare in Brewer Street, London, in 1865, selling musical instruments from Jew's-harps at six shillings per gross to symphonies at £36 each (extra tuning, five shillings). Violins could be had for 12 shillings a piece. They also published music and one of the first composers on their list was the young, and completely unknown, Edward Elgar.

The firm later became Beare & Son, specialising in instruments of the violin family and managed by John Beare's younger son, Walter. In 1892 John Beare opened a retail shop in Wardour

Royal Army Service Corps in North Africa), served as managing director until his retirement in 1978. Under his direction Beare & Son enlarged its sources of supply, not only acquiring stock from traditional centres such as Mirecourt in France and Mittenwald in Germany, but also initiating imports from makers in Czechoslovakia and Romania. He was particularly concerned to find affordable instruments for music students.

J. & A. Beare is now under the direction of his cousin Charles Beare, a leading authority on the valuation of stringed instruments worldwide.

"Dick" Beare was born in Surbiton in 1908, the younger son of Walter Beare and Constance Wodehouse – one of the Kimberley Wodehouses and a distant cousin of the novelist

P.G. Wodehouse. He was educated at Charterhouse where, in his last two years, he was a member of the school's football and cricket XIs. Going on to Jesus College, Cambridge, he won a football Blue in 1929 and a golf Blue in 1930 – in the same team as Henry Longhurst. It was said that he could easily have won a third for cricket, had he stayed up another year.

Over the years he played regularly with the Corinthian Causals and won numerous golf trophies including the Ogilvie Shield, in 1928 and 1929, the Neale Cup (1929) and the Frigate (1930) at Thorpeness Golf Club, and the much-coveted Harry Vardon Cup at West Herts Golf Club in 1928. He was also Suffolk County Champion in 1946. (Had he followed his instincts he could have become a successful professional golfer – he was a scratch player at 16.)

In 1947 he married the musical journalist, and future biographer of Arnold Dolmetsch, Margaret Campbell. They shared many interests including the theatre, concert-going and foreign travel.

Dick Beare was cheerful, equal in temperament and possessed great personal charm. He was physically fit and was still playing golf until well into his eighties and thought nothing of walking five or six miles a day "just to keep trim".

STEVIE AAL

Richard Barrington Beare, violin dealer; born Surbiton, Surrey 20 July 1908; married 1947 Margaret Campbell (two sons, one daughter); died Wendover, Buckinghamshire 18 April 1998.

FAITH & REASON

God's secret intention for the people of Brentwood

Has the Conservative Party been infiltrated by a born-again sect?

TREVOR BARNES reports

SOME years ago, in my trainee reporter days, I was dispatched to cover an Easter Pageant put on by amateurs at Rochester Cathedral. I turned up at an evening rehearsal to confront good cheer, enthusiasm, children by the carload – and for good measure, an incontinent donkey sauntering up the nave. The whole project had been the brainchild of a spirited local woman whose name I have now forgotten. But I have never been able to get out of my head her stated motivation for staging the event. "I felt the Lord was asking me to do something," she said, "and He was asking me to do it for Tonbridge." For Tonbridge. A nice touch, that. I had to admit that God is nothing if not specific when He has to be.

I thought back to Rochester on Thursday night when polling day brought out the faithful of Brentwood in Essex for the final count at the town's leisure centre. True, they were entirely different events but the introduction of personal religious convictions into

otherwise neutral pursuits – in one case staging a pageant and in the other fighting the local elections – seemed to be a common thread and one that appears to be weaving itself more and more frequently into the fabric of British public life. Not every one is happy about it.

I should perhaps first explain that the citizens of Brentwood have not been born again en masse. After all, this part of the world owes more to the Green rather than the Bible Belt. However, in recent weeks the activities of a local Pentecostal church have forced religion, uncharacteristically, into the news. It all began when the local Conservative Association noticed a dramatic increase in its membership. By January of this year in the Pilgrim's Hatch ward it had suddenly risen from 16 to 118. Now it is over 200. Delighted turned to suspicion when it became clear that the new members had one thing in common. They all belonged to the Pilgrim's Hatch Pentecostal Church, a thriving Christian fellowship based in, you've guessed it, Pilgrim's Hatch.

As the local Tories found themselves having to adjust to the ways of the newcomers there was talk of "takeover" and "infiltration". All of it was strenuously denied by the church whose leader, a powerful and charismatic former policeman, Michael Reid, said church members were merely exercising their

democratic rights to take part in local politics for the common good. They were, he said, Tories who happened to be Christians. Even so some local officials smelled a rat. Why were they suddenly so interested in the Conservative Party now? Why hadn't that same 118 joined the Tory footsoldiers as they took to the doorstep for the General Election? In short, what was their ulterior motive?

There was none, the Church explained. Democratic rights, desire to make a difference, need to put Christian values of honesty and integrity back into political life, etc. etc. Nothing suspicious at all.

Veteran Tories were not reassured and they prepared themselves for the inevitable dispute and division. The extent to which the local Conservative association is divided was there to see on Thursday. One rosette-hunting faction, each inclined to view the other with caution. Such a shame that the mere mention of religion in the same breath as politics seems to create an uneasy lull in any conversation. But it does. It has to be said that of the five Pentecostal Conservatives fighting for election on Thursday at least two were far from being callow political virgins lured into the fray after prayerful consideration. They were local Tory politicians of long standing, seasoned campaigners who

"just happened to be Christians". In the time-honoured way beloved of all activists of whatever religious or political affiliation they interpreted defeat as victory and pointed to the increased vote they had managed to secure. Again, some non-Pentecostal workers were unconvinced. They had been torn, they said, between the desire to vote Conservative and their reluctance to endorse "church-sponsored" candidates. Personally they had nothing against them as individuals. It was their affiliation to the controversial Pentecostal fellowship which was causing concern. "I don't think the Conservative Association will survive," said one.

In the event the Liberal Democrats hung on to overall control with the Conservatives losing one contested seat. As we filed out of the hall just before midnight a defeated but buoyant Pentecostal man confronted the possibility that the result might just be God's way of telling him something. "If He is telling me something," he said, "I'm too tired to listen and I'm going home for a cup of tea." Equally defiant in defeat, his colleagues made their exits too, fired by the promise, "We'll be back."

And they will, too, unmoved by comments from within their own party that religion and politics don't mix. Nowadays, it seems, increasingly, they do. I blame the Government.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
TODAY: Princess Alexandra, Chancellor of Lancaster University and Ruskin Library at Lancaster University, Lancashire, marries Mr James Alexander, 3rd Baronet, of Chatsworth, Derbyshire, in the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, London. The wedding service will be conducted by the Queen's Chaplain and Groom of the Chapel Royal, Mr Alan Bennett, actor and playwright, 64; Miss Candice Bergen, actress, 52; The Right Rev Cyril Bowles, assistant Bishop, diocese of Gloucester, 52; Miss Sheila Burrell, actress, 76; Dr Vincent Cable MP, 55; Mr John Cook, consultant surgeon, 58; Lord Cooke of Thorndon, former President, New Zealand Court of Appeal, 73; Sir Terry Downes, boxer, 62; Mr Alister Finney, actor and director, 62; Mr Carlo Maria Giulini, conductor, 81; Mr Keith Haskel, ambassador to Brazil, 59; Sir Geoffrey Holland, Vice-Chancellor, Exeter University, 60; Miss Glenda Jackson, actress, 60; Maj-Gen Peter Davies, Director General, RSPCA, 60; Maj-Gen Edward Furdon, defence consultant, 73; Sir Alan Gardiner QC, 86; Sir Basil Kelly, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, Northern Ireland, 78; Miss June Kros-Mower, radio presenter, 68; Lady Lucia Landon (Lady Wertheim), writer, broadcaster and photographer, 55; Mr Richard Lavers, ambassador to Ecuador, 51; Sir John Laws, High Court judge, 53; Miss Maureen Lipman, actress, 52; Lord Milligan, a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 64; Lt-Gen Sir Anthony Mullens, former Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, 62; Lord Mountbatten, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 69; Mr Gavin Lyall, author, 66; Sir John McDermott, a Lord Justice of Appeal, Northern Ireland, 71; Miss Geraldine McEwan, actress, 52; Professor Alistair MacFarlane, former Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Brunel University, 67; Mr Brian McMaster, Director, Edinburgh Festival, 53; Dr Roy Massey, Master of the Chetham's Library, Manchester, 66; Mr David Plastow, Chairman, Medical Research Council, 66; Mr John Robertson, former deputy chairman, Barclays de Zoete Wedd, 64; Mr Patrick Reckitt, actor, 46; Mr Vernon Sankey, chief executive, 49; Mr Malcolm Savidge MP, 52; Miss Joan Sims, actress, 68; Admiral Sir Victor Smith, former Chairman, Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee, 83; Ms Clare Ward MP, 26; Mr Graham Yarrow, 62; Lord Smith, consulting surgeon, 64; Sir Denis Thatcher Bt, company director, 83.

BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR, JEREMY WARNER
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BMW will fight VW for control of Rolls

By Michael Harrison

THE BATTLE for control of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars was threatening to degenerate into an unseemly legal squabble last night after BMW indicated it would rely on spoiling tactics to thwart the agreed £430m offer from its German rival Volkswagen.

BMW, whose £430m bid was discarded by Rolls' parent company Vickers in favour of the higher VW offer, said it would not get involved in a "dutch auction" for the company, suggesting it will not attempt to increase its offer.

Instead BMW is relying upon Rolls-Royce plc, the aero-engine maker which owns the Rolls-Royce name, to use its legal rights to block the transfer of the trade name to VW.

As a further frustrating tactic, BMW repeated its intention to stop supplying engines for Rolls' latest models, the Silver Seraph and the Bentley Arnage, if the sale to VW went ahead - which could prompt a damages claim from Vickers.

BMW is due to outline its strategy in a statement early next week. Sources at the Munich-based company indicated it would not include an increased offer for Rolls.

Rolls-Royce plc has made no secret of its support for the offer from BMW, with which it already has a joint venture to make aircraft engines. In a statement yesterday the aero-engine group said it would "take whatever action is necessary or appropriate" to protect its interests.

The statement made no reference to VW but it pointedly "welcomed" the initial announcement by Vickers that it had agreed to sell Rolls to BMW, even though this was suspended this week by the improved VW offer.

Vickers is recommending that shareholders reject the BMW offer and instead approve the sale of Rolls to VW at an extraordinary meeting

on 4 June.

In its statement yesterday the aero-engine maker said it was confident that it would be able to conclude a definitive agreement with BMW for the use of the Rolls-Royce name.

It also said that the European Commission had upheld its rights to the Rolls-Royce name under a 1973 agreement, including the right to veto the transfer of the marque to a non-UK owner.

Vickers maintains that the clause is unenforceable and a breach of EU competition law. It also argued that if the aero-engine company carried out its threat to block the deal it would end up damaging the marque. "The halo effect of the Rolls-Royce name comes from the motor car and goes to the aero-engine company, not the other way around," she added.

Under the engine contract, either party has to give the other 12 months notice of its intention to terminate the supply agreement. However, it is understood that BMW only has to give Rolls six months notice in the event that the company is transferred to a rival car maker.

BMW does not believe this would give VW sufficient time to find an alternative supply of engines, forcing it to close down the Rolls production line at Crewe.

But a VW board member, Robert Buechelhofer, indicated yesterday that it had contingency plans.

"We are going on the idea that a solution of this problem would be possible in the short term," he said.

VW has offered to buy Cosworth from Vickers and then use that as a source of engine supplies. Cosworth adapts the V12 and V6 engines that BMW currently supplies for the Seraph and Bentley. VW also has its own V12 engine under development but it is not clear that would be available in time for commercial production should BMW carry out its threat to stop engine supplies.

Gordon Brown meets children in a Jakarta slum. Tackling social problems needed world support, he said

US jobless rate at new low

THE US unemployment rate tumbled to a 28-year low of 4.3 per cent in April as the supercharged American economy churned out 262,000 new jobs, with only manufacturing showing any ill effects from the Asian currency crisis.

The unemployment rate was down from 4.7 per cent in March. Meanwhile, payroll employment outside the farm sector grew last month by a brisk 262,000, recovering from a revised 24,000 decline in jobs in March.

While the payroll employment gain was just slightly above the 259,000 Wall Street economists had expected, the steep drop in the unemployment rate was a surprise and helped to push prices down in the US bond market.

In addition to hitting its lowest level since February 1970, the jobless rate posted its largest one-month point drop since May 1994. The 0.4 percentage point drop in the unemployment rate underscored just how strong the US economy remains and is likely to increase pressure on the Federal Reserve to

start raising interest rates to cool things down to prevent inflation from re-igniting.

"We now have a labour market that is as tight as can be," said Robert Dederick, economist at Northern Trust in Chicago. "You have to reach into the nooks and crannies to get workers in the United States now."

Cynthia Latta, an economist at Standard and Poor's DRI, said yesterday's report made a Fed rate rise much more likely. She noted that the closely watched figure on hourly earnings showed wages were 4.4 percent higher than a year ago, a level she said would cause concern at the central bank about wage pressures.

Wall Street, which has seened in recent weeks over rising and falling concerns about Fed rate hikes, shrugged off jitters over monetary policy and toasted news that the economy was in great shape. By mid-morning in New York, the Dow Jones industrial average was up almost 90 points at 9066.

The US job market, which has been exceptionally strong over the past year, hit a bout of weakness in March as cooler-than-normal weather put a damper on hiring in construction and other industries. Hiring made a strong comeback, with job gains occurring in a number of key industries led by services. However, the manufacturing sector lost 10,000 jobs in April following a 7,000 decline in March.

Workers continued to rack up steady increases in their pay rates. Average hourly earnings rose by 4 cents to \$12.67. Year-on-year, average hourly earnings were up 4.4 percent, the biggest increase since a matching 12-month rise in November 1983.

The rise in earnings was another negative factor for the bond market, as it further underlined fears of wage inflation.

"The thing that really sticks out

is the average hourly earnings, for

which we had been told to expect a

low number ... We got a high

number," said Simon Cook, head of trading at Co-operative Bank in London.

Brown wants 'yellow card' IMF warnings

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Japanese economy recovers quickly," he said.

Earlier G7 meetings openly criticised the Japanese government for not doing enough. Yesterday Robert Rubin, the US Treasury Secretary, welcomed the measures but urged further progress on structural economic reforms.

Mr Rubin and Hikaru Matsunaga, Japan's finance minister, repeated earlier calls to co-operate in the foreign exchange markets and expressed concern that the yen should not be "excessively" weak.

This helped take the yen slightly higher on the foreign exchanges. The pound weakened against the dollar yesterday, ending at 1.637. It closed at 2.895 against the German mark.

The Chancellor, just back from a swift tour of South East Asia, was also keen to emphasise the importance of tackling the social problems triggered by the financial crisis. "They have got to be addressed now, with world support," he said.

But Mr Brown added that political reform was also needed. Referring to Indonesia, where riots have alarmed the financial markets, he said: "The economic reform they agree is necessary must be accompanied by ... political reform with respect to individual rights and by social reform as well."

He defended the IMF against accusations that its programmes had triggered social unrest, saying failure to implement the fund's structural reform programmes would make the poor even greater victims of the crisis.

Mr Camdessus too said it was essential to make sure that the poorest people shared in the benefits of economic globalisation.

The continuing economic difficulties in Japan remain a cause for concern, said the European monetary affairs commissioner, Yves-Thibault de Silguy.

He told a news conference the recent stimulus package announced by the Japanese government was impressive and a step in the right direction, but a full and rapid implementation of the package was vital. More needed to be done to boost the Japanese economy, including implementing tax cuts.

EMI pulls out of talks on takeover

Hillsdown to be split up

By Andrew Yates

EMI, the music group, yesterday surprised the City by announcing it had terminated takeover talks eight days after confirming it was in negotiations.

The company said that despite discussions lasting several weeks, no offer has been received from the third party, widely believed to be Canadian drinks and entertainment giant Seagram, "and the board has informed the other party that it is not willing to let the uncertainty continue".

The initial announcement on 30 April prompted a sharp rise in EMI's share price. Yesterday's development was too late for the stock market to react.

The announcement came days after the Dutch music and film giant PolyGram was effectively put on the block after Philips Electronics said it was considering options for its 75 per cent stake. Analysts believe EMI's suitor may now be interested in PolyGram.

Continental European biscuits, wines and spirits operations will all be sold off.

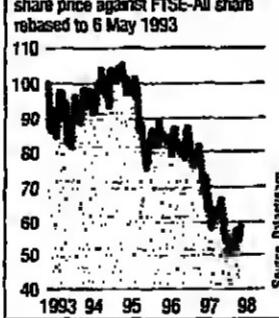
Hillsdown hopes to raise up to £600m from disposals, the majority of which will be returned to shareholders rather than spent on new acquisitions.

After the disposals Hillsdown will be a pure grocery group, retaining famous brands such as Typhoo and Chivers. But the changes are likely to see the Hillsdown name, which has been around for 28 years, disappear.

Hillsdown also plans to slash the size of its £10m head office overhead and will undergo a radical boardroom shake up although there will not be widespread job losses throughout the group.

Analysts predict Fairview New Homes could be valued at more than £300m, while the chilled food division could be worth £400m. They have placed a break up value of

Hillsdown Holdings share price against FTSE All share released to 6 May 1993



group, plans to step down to be succeeded by Michael Teacher, a divisional director.

Mr Greener could receive a pay-off of around £400,000. Ray Mackie, Hillsdown's finance director, is also leaving the group.

Analysts predict Fairview New Homes could be valued at more than £300m, while the chilled food division could be worth £400m. They have placed a break up value of

around 200p on the group. Hillsdown's shares closed at 189 yesterday, up 2.5p.

Hillsdown is the latest in a long line of conglomerates, including former stock market stars such as Hanson, who have decided to do the splits after falling out of favour with the City. It shares have underperformed the stock market by almost 50 per cent over the last five years.

Asked why the group had not chosen to split itself up before, Mr Greener said: "Hillsdown was a very large, diversified conglomerate. Last year we disposed of 10 businesses which created the platform for radical solution."

Sir John Nott said: "We believe that the restructuring proposals we have outlined today, which are both imaginative and far-reaching, will deliver increased value to our shareholders."

By Peter Thal Larsen

BRITISH Digital Broadcasting, the joint venture between the television groups Granada and Carlton, yesterday said it was on track to launch digital in the fourth quarter of this year and claimed it would need 2 million subscribers to break even.

But in their first formal presentation to analysts, BDB officials gave no indication when the company might reach that level.

"It will make profits of more than £100m with 3 million subscribers, and with 5 million subscribers that figure rises to £250m," Stephen Grabiner, BDB chief executive, said in a statement after the meeting.

Disclosing their first detailed forecasts, company officials highlighted the perceived advantages of their terrestrial ven-

ture over its satellite and cable rivals. With the launch of digital television this year, British viewers will be able to plug into a plethora of channels offering sharper images and CD-quality sound compared with the five standard channels that most people currently watch.

Three digital television groups will be vying for viewers' subscription fees, with BDB and the satellite company BSkyB seen as the biggest rivals in the race to dominate the pay-television market.

Shares in the media companies were little changed after the news, with Carlton up 9.5p at 517, Granada down 4p at 1087, and BSkyB up 1.5p.

BDB's launch will offer at least 15 channels with a capacity of up to 30 compared with the 200-channel satellite service that BSkyB plans to begin rolling out next month.

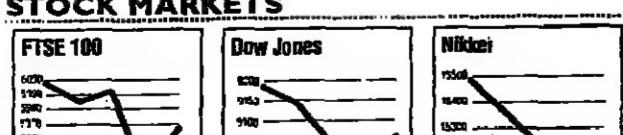
TOURIST RATES

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Australia (\$) | 2,4841 |
| Malta (lira) | 0.6202 |
| Austria (schilling) | 19.79 |
| Belgium (francs) | 58.20 |
| Canada (\$) | 2,2980 |
| Netherlands (guilder) | 3,1746 |
| New Zealand (\$) | 2,9072 |
| Norway (krone) | 11.86 |
| Portugal (escudos) | 288.08 |
| Saudi Arabia (rials) | 5,9822 |
| Singapore (\$) | 2,3253 |
| Spain (pesetas) | 238.99 |
| Greece (drachma) | 489.29 |
| South Africa (rand) | 7,9799 |
| Hong Kong (\$) | 12.34 |
| Ireland (pounds) | 1,1181 |
| India (rupees) | 60.01 |
| Thailand (bahts) | 57.86 |
| Malta (lira) | 394154 |
| USA (\$) | 1,6038 |
| Malaysia (ringgit) | 213.97 |

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS



| Indices | Close | Change | Change (%) | 52 wk high | 52 wk low | Yield (%) |
|----------------|---------|--------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| FTSE 100 | 5669.80 | 31.80 | 0.54 | 6150.50 | 4382.80 | 3.37 |
| FTSE 250 | 5741.10 | 38.40 | 0.67 | 5706.50 | 4382.20 | 2.62 |
| FTSE 350 | 2887.90 | 16.20 | 0.56 | 2958.70 | 2141.80 | 3.26 |
| FTSE All Share | 2019.12 | 18.00 | 0.57 | 2081.12 | 2106.59 | 3.24 |
| FTSE Smallcap | 2704.60 | 18.70 | 0.70 | 2695.90 | 2182.10 | 2.98 |
| FTSE Prefs | 1449.00 | 10.60 | 0.74 | 1428.40 | 1225.20 | 3.13 |
| FTSE AIM | 1098.40 | 5.10 | 0.47 | 1055.70 | | |



**JEREMY
WARNER**
ON HOW WIM
DUISENBERG
MIGHT OPERATE
AT THE
EUROPEAN
CENTRAL BANK

Whatever happened to gentlemanly behaviour?

THE THING about gentlemen's agreements is that no one, apart from those who agree them, is meant to know of their existence. It works like this. You and I agree on a course of action which neither of us likes very much, but we think a reasonable compromise in the circumstances. Since subjecting it to public scrutiny would involve one or both of us in loss of face, and the credibility of what we are doing would as a consequence be undermined, we have to trust each other to carry it out without formal contract. It's our little secret, just between you and me.

The fiasco of a deal that was hammered out in Brussels last weekend over the presidency of the European Central Bank, under which Wim Duisenberg "voluntarily" cuts short his term and makes way after four years for Jean-Claude Trichet, was meant to be a gentleman's agreement too. Unfortunately it fell a long way short of the model.

First, the manner in which it was born was the very reverse of gentlemanly behaviour. It was hard-fought brinkmanship right to the end, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion it wouldn't have happened at all but for the fact that the very future of the euro was threatened.

Second, having apparently agreed it with all parties, Tony Blair then announced it to an incredulous world, thus breaking one

of the cardinal rules of the gentleman's agreement – that it shouldn't be made public. This was because the French insisted it be made public, so there could be no question of it being reneged on, and so that everyone would know La France had scored a victory. Plainly Jacques Chirac does not believe either in modesty or gentlemanly behaviour.

Later Mr Blair tried to gloss over the reality even further by saying that long ago Mr Duisenberg had made it clear he would not serve the full eight years in view of his age, which is 62. So he was always going to go early and there's nothing new about that. But though Mr Blair might like to believe nothing of significance has happened, the rest of us know differently.

Third, Mr Duisenberg then denied there had been an agreement as such, describing the notion of the plan outlined by Mr Blair as "absurd", and saying it was not impossible he would stay longer than four years. So much for gentlemanly behaviour.

All this is in marked contrast to the gentleman's agreement everyone suspects exists between the British Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and the Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George. It will be recalled that Mr George was recently awarded a second five-year term, to run from July. For choice, the Chancellor would have had a change at the top, but a lack of credible alternatives, not to men-

tion pressure from the Prime Minister and the City, eventually persuaded him that continuity was the better path.

However, no one would find it in the least bit surprising if Mr George retired with a gong before his second five-year term is up, having by then seen through the important tasks of separating the bank's supervisory from its monetary policy functions and established the credibility of the bank as an independent determinant of interest rates. If there is such an agreement, it is not admitted to.

The whole point of these things is that though there might be a political fix, it should not be seen to exist. The effect would be to undermine the credibility of an institution which is meant to be free from political interference. In the shenanigans over the ECB, the politics of the situation was as visible as a 52-tonne truck. It would have been impossible to miss it. Mr Duisenberg then went on to irritate the world further by described the manner of his appointment as "absurd".

The upshot is that the integrity of the ECB has to some extent already been compromised. To what degree, and whether in the long run it matters very much, are more difficult questions to answer. Much depends on how Mr Duisenberg steers his course. So what sort of a man is he, and what can the markets expect of him?

Certainly, he seems of strongly independent character, unafraid to speak his mind whatever the embarrassment caused. That's got to be positive, as perhaps is his liking for country music, which distinguishes him quite markedly from other grey-suited central bankers. Before MEPs this week, he gave a bravura performance of some daring, insisting among other things that the Bank of England's practice of publishing the minutes of its monetary policy committee meetings was wrong. Not for 16 years would that happen with the ECB, he said, since the effect was to encourage market speculation and harden positions within the board.

OK, so transparency is out. If the ECB is to be truly independent then it has to be so in private, he seemed to be saying. This is probably not such a good sign, demonstrating that Mr Duisenberg does not understand markets as fully as he should. If the markets know nothing about the decision-making process, they will speculate even more actively. Will it be the Italian, Spanish, Germans or perhaps even the Irish who get the upper hand in monetary policy this month? All this will be grist to the speculators' mill. There is a real chance of chaos as politicians trumpet their national interests into this vacuum of knowledge.

Mr Duisenberg is also known as an in-

fation-busting hawk. Recently he was voted in a poll of analysts the most hawkish central banker in Europe. Judging by his record, we ought to expect a hard-line, ultra-conservative approach to policy. With the pound already decisively off its peak against the mark, financial markets are beginning to anticipate just that. The change in sentiment is tangible.

Even two months ago it was still fashionable to think of sterling as a safe haven from a weak euro. Now it seems that sterling's strength may have been a cyclical thing after all. Further, the euro might be operated as a hard, strong currency, the more so after last weekend's fiasco, since the ECB will have something to prove. So many European leaders are putting out their chests and talking in terms of the euro rapidly becoming a reserve currency capable of knocking the dollar in the face that perhaps we should expect nothing less.

These are early days, however, and we shouldn't count on any such outcome. The ECB is not De Nederlandsche Bank, the small and perfectly formed central bank where Mr Duisenberg earned his reputation. Keeping the lid on a potentially unruly 17 member multinational board is a different order of challenge altogether. Certainly, this will not be a board capable of being managed on the basis of agreement between gentlemen.

Fund group makes 'dash for cash'

By Andrew Verity

SCOTTISH Equitable yesterday became the first fund manager in eight months to make a public "dash for cash", saying it had been prompted by fear of exaggerated profit forecasts.

The life insurer's fund management arm, Scottish Equitable Asset Management, said it believed analysts were overstating corporate earnings by as much as 3 per cent.

Profit forecasts by analysts put UK corporate earnings at 8 per cent in 1998 – but Scottish Equitable said its own analysts put the figure closer to 5 per cent.

Alistair Byrne, investment strategist, said: "We don't think the forecasts fairly discount the slowdown in UK economic growth this year and they don't take account of the sustained strength of the pound up until now. It does have implications for the valuations [of listed companies]."

Mr Byrne said analysts' forecasts appeared sometimes to be influenced by their employment in the same firm as stockbrokers.



Well served: The notes were bought by insurance firms

US funds for Greenalls

GREENALLS, the pubs and hotels group, yesterday completed a private placement of \$125m (£75m) 10-year guaranteed senior notes. The proceeds will be used initially to repay short-term bank indebtedness and will provide a committed source of funds to support planned investment in the medium term. The notes were purchased by a group of US insurance companies. Alan Rothwell, the finance director, said he was delighted to return to the US market "in order to provide a continuing source of long-term capital to finance the continued expansion of our business".

THE COLLAPSE of Robert Feld's Resort Hotels group four years ago and his subsequent jailing for fraud continues to produce great waves of litigation. There are at least nine writs in circulation so far from various parties, seeking compensation over the £20m fraud. The strongest writs must surely be those from Roberta Feld, Mr Feld's sister, who is suing him for the money she lost in the Resort Hotel failure.

Even though Mr Feld is currently serving a six-year sentence at Coldingley Open Prison (recently reduced from eight years), he is also being sued by his sister together with his wife Tara, who is acting on behalf of his late mother.

Both writs have been issued via Harkays, the solicitors who previously represented Mr Feld during his criminal trial last year. Both writs are against Mr Feld; three other Resort directors, and the company's auditors Coopers & Lybrand. Mr Feld's mother's estate lost £200,000 when Resort went bust.

Meanwhile last week solicitors Edwin Coe issued two writs against Mr Feld and his

professional advisers on behalf of shareholders who also lost out. Both writs concern a prospectus for a rights issue to produce great waves of litigation. There are at least nine writs in circulation so far from various parties, seeking compensation over the £20m fraud. The strongest writs must surely be those from Roberta Feld, Mr Feld's sister, who is suing him for the money she lost in the Resort Hotel failure.

In one writ 252 individual shareholders are demanding damages from the remains of Resort Hotels. Mr Feld and 14 other defendants, including Coopers the auditors, Barclays de Zoete Wedd, the brokers to the issue, and a raft of nominees companies such as Barclay Share Nominees Limited.

This writ has been prompted by the Resort Hotels Shareholders Action Group, founded after a company meeting in 1993 which vividly revealed the parlous state of the company's finances. The group represents over 500 shareholders and is chaired by John Bancroft, who is named as one of the plaintiffs of last week's writ.

Other plaintiffs include The Leukaemia Research Fund, which invested £31,500 in 86,000 Resort shares between May and October 1992.

In a second writ issued by Edwin Coe last week Invesco Enterprise Trust is demanding damages over the forged prospectus on 30 April 1992 by Mr Feld, who forged the figures to make the business look more successful than it was. The rights issue aimed to raise £20.6m.

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TIME OFF

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Saturday 9 May 1988



PICTURE OF THE WEEK Soaking up the sun at Syon Park. Monarch and tree nymph butterflies by Tom Pilston. To order a 12x9 print (price £15) call 071-293 2534.

Week in, week out

William Hartston signs up for the single European song title: 'When Will You Save Your Boom-Bang-a-Dinge-Loo For Me, piep piep?'

It is a little-known fact that if you multiply the number of entrants (25) in today's Eurovision Song Contest by the number of times (four) Norway has scored *nul points*, then add the number of times the contest has been held (43 including today's), and finally subtract the number of UK victories (five), you get exactly the number of times the word "it" occurred in the lyrics of Spain's winning song "La, la, la" in 1968. The other odd thing about the Eurovision Song Contest is that instruments are tuned to A at 442 Hz rather than the usual concert pitch A at 440 Hz. The effect is to make the songs sound a little on the sharp side, perhaps to counteract the flatness of the rest of the event.

Yet for cognoscenti, the attraction lies not in the pitch of the music, but in the timbre of the lyrics. Will anything match the perfect Euro-blandness of past winners "Boom-Bang-a-Bang" (1969), "Ding Dinge Dong" (1975), "A Ba Ni Bi" (1978), or Sweden's somewhat latvianish "Daggi Loo - Daggi Ley" (1984)? Will there be anything as potently meteorological as "Flingad av en Stormvind", which brought Sweden another victory in 1991?

There is no doubt that winning titles have become more introspective over the years. After "Save Your Kisses for Me" in 1976 and "Hold Me Now" in 1987, followed closely by "Ne Partez Pas Sans Moi" and "Rock Me"

in 1988 and 1989, the depth of true Euro-doubt finally burst through in 1992 with "Why Me?" a question that remains tantalisingly unresolved.

We shall not find the answer this year. Only more questions. The Irish entry asks "Is Always Over Now?" and with eight of the 28 lines in the lyrics ending with question marks, the whole song sounds like something from a specialist round of *Mastermind*: ... answering questions on Romance, your time starts now. How can you say it's over now? How can you wave it all goodbye? Is always over now? Does it never last that long? Were the feelings that I had ever right or was it wrong? You passed on just one question: Why is it that Ireland wins the Eurovision Song Contest so often? And the answer is that everyone who doesn't want England to win always votes for Ireland, and everyone likes voting for smaller nations who sing bouncy songs in English.

The Spanish entry, "What Will I Do Without You", is even more quizzical, with 10 questions in 29 lines, including the tauntological "What will I do without you if you're not here any more?" Probably much the same as I'd do without you if you were here any more.

The most surprising aspect of this year's song is the degree of agreement between nations of the former Yugoslavia. With

Macedonia (which we have to call "Fyrom" to avoid annoying the Greeks) singing "Somebody Stop the Dawn" and Croatia singing "May the Sun Never Rise", it is clear that Eurovision has succeeded where Cyrus Vance and Dr David Owen failed.

Last year was the first time the Eurovision was won by a song with "Love" in the title (though "Amour" had appeared in two wins

True Euro-doubt finally burst through in 1992 with 'Why Me?', a question that remains tantalisingly unresolved

ners in the early days of the competition). Perhaps hoping this is the start of a trend, the entries this time include "When Love Turns to Hate" (Poland), "Love is" (Sweden), "The One that I Love" (Malta) and "Guido Loves You" (Germany), the last of which has the promising refrain "Piep, piep, piep, ich hab' Dich lieb" and promises "schick ich Euch meinen Liebeswets, Nussecken und Himbeeren" ("I'll send you my

love tokens – nut biscuits and raspberry ice-cream"). What more can a woman ask? Gastronomically, this should run home a clear winner, but food has rarely attracted the judges, unless you count the 1966 winner, "Merci Cherie".

The Estonian entry "Mere Lapsed" appears at first glance to be the tale of a love that, unlike the Polish one that has turned to hate, has merely lapsed – perhaps the story of a couple forgetting to renew their marriage licence. Yet it turns out that the words of the title are Estonian and mean Children of the Sea. The lyrics tell the story of lovers stealing off in a boat together: "We'll challenge every storm that comes along, united with the power that we belong," according to the translation on the BBC Eurovision website (though, to be fair, it probably makes more sense in Estonian). All the same, lines such as "We'll harness raging winds to lead us on" and "riding the depth of our despair there'll always be a wave that gets us there" suggest that their romance might do better if they first waited for the weather to improve.

The UK entry "Where Are You?" sensibly stays on land in the pursuit of love. It starts "I see a picture in a frame, I see a face without a name, Riding alone on an empty train". She then sings: "I would drive through the rain." Presumably in pursuit of

the train, though unless it's a slow suburban service I wouldn't give her much chance of catching it, and when she goes on, "You could unlock these chains", it sounds as though she'd be much happier on a bicycle anyway. Still, if he didn't even bother to tell her his name, I fear the romance is doomed.

But will anything come close to those record 138 fa-la-las in 1967? The only challenge this time comes from the Finnish entry "Aava", of which the BBC's "free translation" begins: "Wide Earth, open the wide Earth, Wide Earth, open the wide earth, Beauty, greatness, Beauty, greatness, Calm, Wide Earth, open the Wide Earth, Wide Earth open the Wide Earth. Wide." The second verse continues in the same spirit, though there is "Humomaa" just before the end. Apparently there are only six different words in the Finnish original, which may be a good thing because we are told that the singer is a Swedish speaker and her Finnish is not all that good.

Taking everything into account, and remembering that nobody ever votes for the eastern Europeans, only countries of the former Austro-Hungarian empire ever vote for anyone singing in German, and no panel from a country that has signed up for the single European currency will vote for the UK, my money's on Ireland. They always win it anyway.



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Midwest medley: sunset on Lake Michigan, left; Old Mission Lighthouse, below

Photographs:
Robert Harding
Picture Library

Great Lakes ... and the beaches aren't bad

Rolling surf, deep forests ... You name it, Michigan's got it. Donald Hiscock is smitten by the mitten-shaped state

"If you look at my little finger, just by the nail, that's where I come from. Over here, that's kind of where we are right now," said the friendly waitress at Doo's Drive In, a pink-and-hue recreation of a Fifties' restaurant. It looked like the one where Fred Flintstone orders the brootosaurus burger that's so big it capsizes his car. Don's is situated on Grand Traverse Bay, next to Pirate's Cove mini-golf and in a perfect situation for spectacular sunsets. Our waitress for the evening was happy to locate us in that time-honoured way that people from Michigan have, by holding out their hand and pointing confidently to a knuckle or a crease or a mole. It's a quaint global positioning device; Michigan is famous for being shaped like a mitten.

We spent a summer family holiday up in the north-west corner of that mitten in Traverse City, the cherry-growing capital, as it is known – even if the volume production is now out west. We rolled around Lake Michigan, revelling in a state more famous to us than Britain for cars, Kellogg's Corn Flakes and our tendency to mispronounce it Mitch-igan. In the past I had dismissed Michigan as being synonymous with crime and industry, but it's home to the real Midwest.

Michigan may be bordered by Great Lakes, but there is also an abundance of far smaller lakes, with beaches and forests.

My family and I don't dream of revisiting Traverse City for the cherry products, or the enormous burgers and cholesterol-inducing milk shakes; we want to get back to the rolling sun and white, sandy beaches. Our favourite trick back in England is to put photos of beaches down on the table when after-dinner conversation turns to foreign travel. "Where do you think that is?" we ask. "Barbados? The Algarve?" they guess. Most are bowled over when we tell them. We do the hand held up like a mitten bit after that.

Front Street, Traverse City is the main thoroughfare. On Friday evenings in summer they close it to traffic, and the shopkeepers open stalls on the street. The Downtown area becomes a mini-carnival site with musicians, country dancers and low-key street entertainers.

Here the deputy sheriff, leaning against his long white Chevrolet, talked to us about England, where his sister lives in Godalming?

He was tickled pink to be told that we'd been there. He, like most other friendly folk in Northern Michigan, liked to hear our accent. "Thanks for visiting with us," they say. When you're done talking they thank you for the conversation.

The city was founded by lumber barons

last century, whose grand mansions are still to be seen on Sixth Street. The Boardman



to the north of Traverse City on the Leelanau peninsula. We joined other families trudging up the seriously high dune that rises to more than 400ft, only to find yet more sand stretching out in front of us. And, yes, the reserved English tourists couldn't help themselves and joined in the fun of rolling all the way down again, laughing, screaming and getting a mouthful of grit. "Way to go, man!"

Our favourite beach was on the car road, 17-mile peninsula that pokes out north from Traverse City. This is an area of comfortable homes that are beginning to use up the land once occupied by acres of cherry orchards. At the tip of the peninsula is Old Mission Lighthouse, set right on the 45th parallel, level with Bordeaux; hence the proliferation of vines in the area. Cherry-flavoured wine, anyone? Of course, we'd come out for the wine but for the beach at the state park next to the lighthouse. The sand shelves so gently, you can walk out through smooth rocks in clear water for about 100 yards. We were there one evening and watched an awesome ball of red sun sink into the lake. But after the pleasure came the pain, as the bugs began to bite.

For all that, one of the simplest and best mementos of a holiday up in Michigan is when you sit out at night and look at the stars. We were staying out of town

where there was little street lighting. The sky was blacker than we had ever seen it, and we gazed at the Milky Way and constellations that we hadn't realised were there all the time.

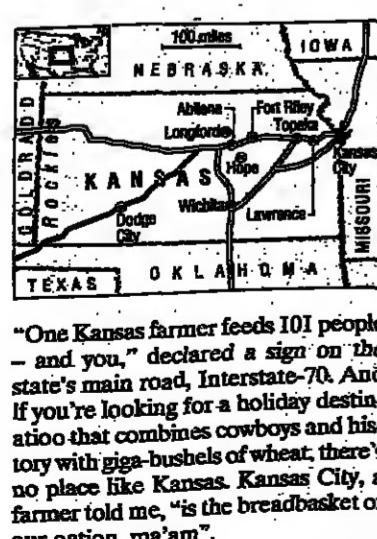
It's corny, I know, but after the child had gone to sleep on the last night of our stay, we couldn't help but make a wish out loud when a shooting star blazed across the heavens, distracting us from the soporific sounds of the waves lapping the lakeshore just a few yards away. We wished that we could return soon – every summer would be just fine – back to that place I can point to quickly in the palm of my hand, thanks to Lindy at Doo's Drive In.

Detroit is served daily from Heathrow by British Airways, and from Gatwick by Northwest. Alternatively, nearby Chicago has flights from Heathrow (Air India, American Airlines, BA, and United), Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester (all American Airlines). Fares in high summer are likely to be pricey, but until mid-June expect to pay about £300 return through discount agents.

Discount travel agents may rent you a car for less than the hire companies offer direct; you should find an economy car for about £30 per day, fully inclusive. If you prefer not to rent a car, the air pass offered by Southwest (01293 596677) is excellent value.

Land of wheat and rodeos

Come to Kansas if you yearn for the romance of the rodeo, a glimpse into frontier days and a chance to see Ike Eisenhower's childhood home. Anne Perret was there



"One Kansas farmer feeds 101 people – and you," declared a sign on the state's main road, Interstate 70. And if you're looking for a holiday destination that combines cowboys and history with giga-bushels of wheat, there's no place like Kansas. Kansas City, a farmer told me, "is the breadbasket of our nation, ma'am".

As you drive west on I-70 through the Flint Hills, a spectacular landscape of rolling hills, wooded river valleys and tall-grass prairie stretches to the horizon. From the interstate road, cowboys can be seen moving their herds across this quintessential American countryside. And south of I-70 is the Home-stead Ranch – a woman-only cattle ranch. If you fancy yourself as a hard-riding wranglerette, you can brand, rope and herd here.

Pioneers streamed across Kansas in

the mid-19th century on the Oregon, Santa Fe and California Trails. Near Topeka, there are antique carts gouged into the prairie by wagon wheels. Fifty miles further west stands Fort Riley, built to protect "pilgrims" on the Oregon Trail from marauding Indians. It is one of the US Army's most important bases. It also

offers the excellent US Cavalry Museum, a buffalo herd and Quarters 24 (better known as the Custer House) which provides a glimpse of the romance and trials of military life after the Civil War. George Armstrong Custer commanded Fort Riley, before riding away to the Battle of Little Big Horn.

Off the interstate road are towns such as Industry, Cottonwood Falls and Enterprise, with streets lined with reminders of frontier days – hitching posts, jailhouses and old false-fronted stores. At Longford, the sign on Slim's Place reads "Hamburgers & Ammunition". These are tiny communities, and their young people are leaving for the cities. At Hope – oo a seat bearing the town's name – someone has added "less" in black paint. We stayed in Abilene, featured in a

cavalry of Westerns. Once it was a wild cowtown, the terminus of the Chisholm Trail. Cowboys drove millions of longhorns up from Texas, to be shipped by rail to Chicago. Even now, immense, meandering Santa Fe trains rumble through the "dee-po".

A whiff of gunsmoke lingers in Abilene. In the 1860s it was a gaudy mix of gambling halls, brothels and saloons. The town hired Wild Bill Hickok to impose law and order, but one night he killed a drunken gambler in a gunfight before accidentally gunning down his own deputy. The townspeople were aghast – a lawman who couldn't tell the good guy from the bad guy was a danger to everyone. They got him out of town fast.

In "Old Abilene Town", original structures stand beside replicas. In summer there are strutting saloon girls, fast-draw competitions and a cowboy encampment where cowboy poet Jack Darrow draws stories about spooked herds and round-ups. Rodeos are held all over Kansas; the best is probably Abilene's Wild Bill Hickok rodeo, which opens with a parade. It is part of a week-long county fair, a showcase

for quilting, canning, horseshoe-tossing and, inevitably, wheat. It's a chance to mingle with folks wearing cowboy boots, big belt buckles and Stetsons, and load up with calorie-busting fair food: corn dogs, hog wings, funnel cakes and root beer floats.

Abilene has two historic homes open to visitors. The Seelye Mansion was built by a patent medicine manufacturer enriched by Wass-Tusa, "health restorer for man, stock and poultry". Dr Seelye and his spinster daughters had one house rule: never throwing anything away. The result is a time capsule of Midwest turn-of-the-century ephemera.

President Dwight Eisenhower's boyhood home is nothing fancy – a simple house on the wrong side of the tracks. His mother was proud of her small parlour: its dime-store vases, the patchwork cushions she embroidered with her seven sons' names, and her books. Beyond her net curtains is something that made her prouder still – her son Dwight's presidential library. House and library are part of the Eisenhower Center. There's an Ike statue

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It's a shore thing

Summer or winter, life is always divine on the edge of Lake Trasimeno, writes Kate Mikhail

It was as if Michelangelo's God from the Sistine Chapel had deserted the heavens for a day to join us mortals in a spot of sunbathing as an impressive, hirsute figure of a man strode purposefully across the beach in a fetching pair of skimpy, navy-blue swimming trunks. I sat mesmerised as this bearded apparition marched towards me – and then around me and off in the direction of the Sulzo Beach Funky Bar. Very appropriate, I thought.

I was at a tiny Umbrian beach on the northern edge of lake Trasimeno, in Passignano, a vast expanse of water with three large islands and surrounded by low, rolling hills covered with olive groves and vineyards. Everyone and their mother, it seems, has their own olive and grape crop, down to one elderly couple I saw with just a handful of trees and vines in their front garden.

For those with lots of energy to burn, there are surfboards, pedal boats and sailing boats for hire – or you can throw yourself around playing volleyball or basketball. Personally, I opted for lolling around under a weeping willow, with gentle strolls in search of the local sights. But this is not one of those beach resorts that is just worth visiting in the summer. In the winter, the air is clear and crisp, the sun warm and the views and walks as scenic as ever, with the added plus of being virtually tourist free.

If you arrive by train, a £1.40 ride from nearby Perugia don't be put off by the deserted ghost town of a station. Just a short walk from here you'll find yourself in the centre of Passignano, home to a tiny ferry port that runs a regular service to Trasimeno's islands.

Here, you can sit outdoors, on the lake's edge, and pose with the best of them. There are a number of colourful bar-style kiosks where the food is fresh and cheap, and chrome jukeboxes dotted around in their own made-to-measure, weather-proof shelters act as magnets to the local designer-clad youths. This is clearly the place where everyone comes to pass the time of day.



Veiled vales: the rolling Umbrian countryside beside Lake Trasimeno



and, to mingle effectively with the Italians, it soon became obvious that dark shades are a must, all year round.

The old centre of Passignano is on a small hill directly above the ferry port and is filled with picturesque dolls' houses and impossibly narrow streets. The view from

the top is spectacular and well worth the uphill climb, although a strange collection of somewhat rosy artworks in the hilltop ruins were a surreal and confusing distraction.

If you spend any length of time in Italy, the chances are that you will start putting on the pounds, as life here is so food-oriented and the food so good. Sooner or later, exercise becomes the only option, which is why Passignano is perfect. There are several walks suggested by the local tourist board that show off the high number of churches and castles around the perimeter of the lake, the most impressive castle being the Castiglione del Lago on the west side of lake Trasimeno; but head off in almost any direc-

tion and you will not be disappointed. I had been tucking into the local chocolate delicacy, *Baci*, which can be bought individually from just about anywhere, and felt that a healthy walk was long overdue. Apart from being dangerously morish, *Baci* carry folded up "messages of love" which have the same gimmicky attraction as the bad jokes you get in Christmas crackers. "When I saw you I fell in love with you," said one, and another: "Where the eyes willingly fall so does the heart and eventually the feet." I was beginning to see why Italian men have a reputation for being such romantics.

On the other hand, who could fail to be poetically inclined in such surround-

Photograph: Pictures Colour Library

ings? Whatever you do, when you visit Trasimeno, make sure you take the ferry to Isola Maggiore, said to have been visited by St Francis of Assisi in 1211. The trip takes about 30 minutes, costs 8.00 lire (£3) return, and is beautifully relaxing. And it is only once you are afloat that you will really appreciate the sheer size of this lake.

The island itself is magical. It is a car-free zone, a great luxury, and has a great walk around its shore path and up to the top of the church of San Archangelo with its 14th-15th century frescos.

Isola Maggiore is quite a tourist attraction in the summer but in the winter and spring it is fairly deserted, and walking into

AVANTI, AVANTI

Getting there

New, low-cost flights to Italy on no-frills airlines make the country much easier and cheaper to reach this summer than before. Go (0845 60 54321) is launching to Rome and Milan on 22 and 23 May respectively, and promises to sell all seats at £100 all summer.

Getting Information

Italian State Tourist Office, 1 Princes Street, London W1R 8AY (071-408 6254; brochure request line 0891-600280).

Getting wet

"Days of heavy rain have resulted in serious flooding and landslides in the southern part of the region of Campania. A state of emergency has been declared. The mountainous area on the borders between the provinces of Salerno and Avellino, where several towns have been hit by mudslides, is worst affected. Other towns which have been badly affected are Stano, Bradigliano, Samo and Quindici (the latter having been completely engulfed by mud). Visitors are strongly advised against travel to these areas. There have also been minor landslides in other areas, such as the holiday resort of Amalfi, where damage has been assessed as minimal" – Foreign Office advice, issued on 6 May.

the local bar felt like barging into someone's private living room. A group of friends were sprawled around, nattering and watching TV, although they did eventually clear a space. Food was not on offer, so if you're going to make a day of it out of season, it may be an idea to pack a picnic.

Later, dining al fresco, high in the hills above the lake in the forecourt of an Italian villa with the dark, gnarly silhouettes of an olive grove just below and the endless stretch of the lake below that, I could understand the pride of the locals and why my host rather harshly rubbished any other nearby town mentioned as "just a dump". Passignano certainly felt out of this world – a resort fit for gods.

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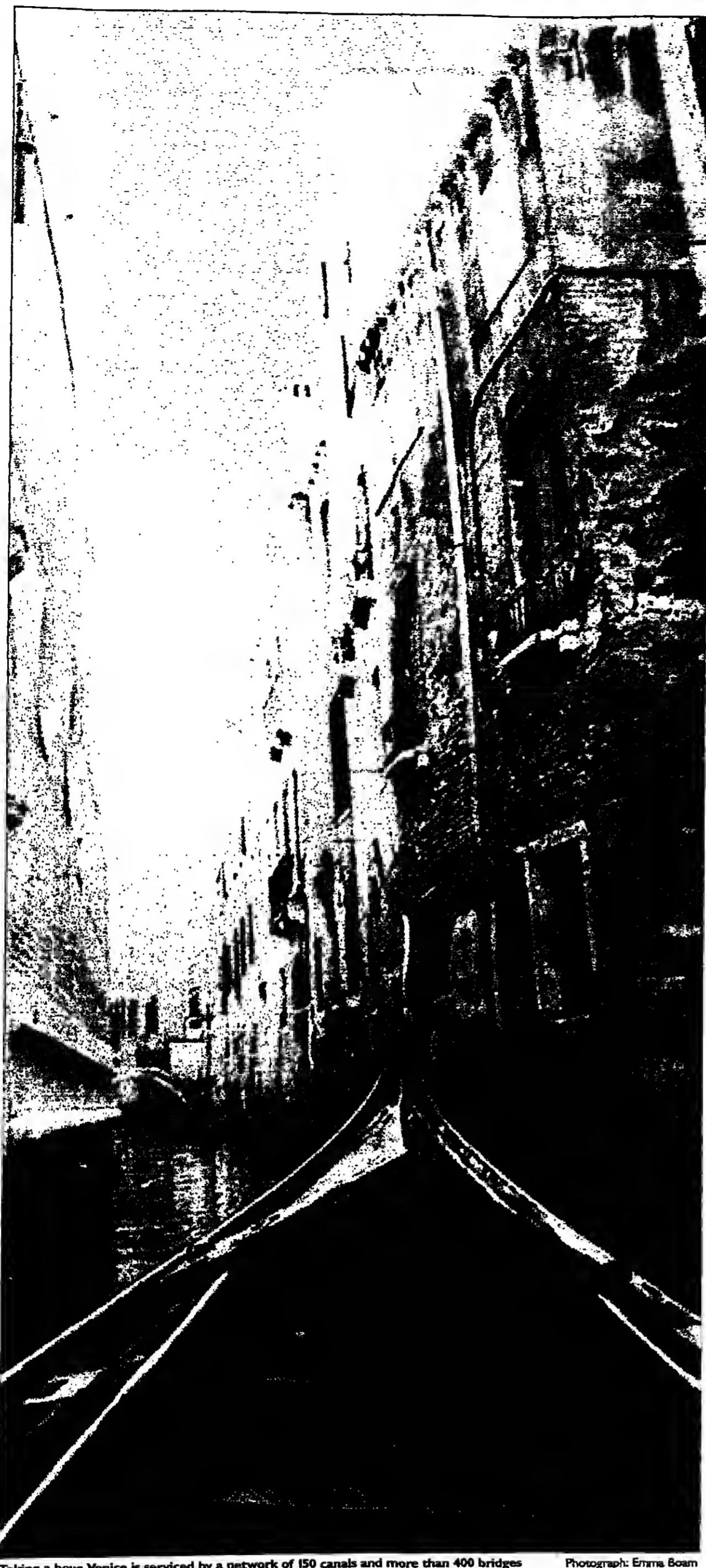
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Taking a bow: Venice is serviced by a network of 150 canals and more than 400 bridges

Photograph: Emma Boam

A plane

One certainty and two outsiders: that's the look of three new flights from Stansted which began on Thursday. As mentioned above, Ryanair (0541 569569) has started services from the Essex airport to Venice for £129 return. More adventurous, the airline is also starting up to Kristianstad in Sweden - close-ish to Malmo, fare £109 return - and St Etienne, near Lyon, for £119. Next month, Ryanair begins flights to two more Italian destinations - Rimini and Pisa - plus Carcassonne in south-west France.

A train

Reims and Rouen are now less than £100 away from Waterloo International station in London. Destinations in eastern and northern France, notably Alsace and Normandy, have been added to the "Eurostar Plus" scheme. Caen and Le Havre are also available for £99 return; Strasbourg, Mulhouse, Nancy and Deauville cost £109. To qualify for these fares, you should book at least a week in advance and include a Saturday night away. Eurostar (0345 303030); Rail Europe (0990 848848).

A boat

The main pavilion of Expo '98, which begins in Lisbon on 21 May, is the Oceanarium - a giant aquarium designed to look like an imaginary boat. The organisers of the event pointedly say: "A delegation was sent to Seville to understand and learn from the Spanish world exposi-

CHECK IN

too, in order to avoid errors done there."

Portuguese tourist office: 0171-494 1853.

A room

The most luxurious youth hostel in the world? The new Armagh hostel officially opened this month, close to both the Catholic and Church of Ireland cathedrals in the city. A twin room costs £21 per night, yet includes an en-suite bathroom, a television set and tea-making paraphernalia. Industrial-sized breakfasts cost an additional £2.75 per person. Bookings: 01861 511800.

A meal

"Evening meals will be a minimum of four courses, accompanied by superior wine," promises First Choice (0990 557755) for its Fine Dining Chalets in the forthcoming winter's ski programme. A week at the Chalet Momosses in La Plagne costs from £429, including flights.

A drink

Passengers on an American Airlines flight from Cali, Colombia to Miami almost got

a freshly brewed cup of liquid heroin, after 15lb of the drug were hidden in coffee packaging. A spokeswoman for American Airlines told *The Independent*: "We're working closely with US customs to investigate what happened. We spend a lot of money trying to halt drug trafficking."

A week from now...

...you could catch one of the most curious bus services trundling around Britain. The Explorer runs on a figure-of-eight route from London via Bath, Oxford, Stratford to York and Edinburgh, returning via the Lake District, Chester and Cambridge. It is a hop on/hop off service that costs £35, with no time limit. For bookings and information, call 0171-263 5435.

A month from now...

...the Spitalfields Festival defiantly shrugs off competition from the World Cup with a performance of Fauré's *Requiem* (the BBC is using another of the composer's works for its coverage of the soccer in France). For details of the events at the East London festival, call 0171-377 1362.

A year from now...

...you'll be able to take off from Gatwick or Manchester on a two-centre holiday to Greece and Turkey. The first departure on the Virgin Holidays (01293 432100) combination is on 2 May 1999, and costs £334 staying a week in each of Marmaris in Turkey and the Greek island of Rhodes.

48 hours in Venice

You need a break - and a shortcut to the soul of Italy's most romantic city. Declan Pratt provides a prescription for the perfect, watery weekend trip

Why go now?

Because this architectural feast of sumptuous churches and palaces is only two hours away, where you'll now get 2,884 lire for your pound. Yet you don't really need a reason to visit Venice - it's without a doubt the world's most romantic city.

Beam down

From this week, Venice is more accessible with Ryanair (0541 569569) now flying from Stansted for £129 return. Expect retaliation from British Airways (0345 222111) and Alitalia (0171-602 7111), which fly from Heathrow and Gatwick respectively.

Get your bearings

The appropriately named Marco Polo Airport is on the mainland, around eight miles from the city. ACTV Bus 5 makes the 30-minute journey across the causeway that connects Venice to the rest of Italy. To arrive in more style take a *motoscafo* (regular motorboat) to San Marco for around £6. A water taxi will set you back £30. Venice is a good definition of the word "unique": 118 islands caught in a web of 150 canals and more than 400 bridges. The heart, metaphorically if not geographically, is the piazza San Marco.

Check in

If you want luxury, Venice has no shortage of choice: the Bauer-Grünwald, Cipriani, Des Bains, Excelsior and Gritti Palace could grace any list of the world's finest hotels. But for James Bond there was only one choice: "The Danieli, of course". In this magnificent Gothic palace (0039 41 522 6480) on the lagoon front, the price for a double *en suite* room ranges from £160 to £320 - breakfast is extra. For something a little more down-to-earth the Three Star Hotel Firenze (0039 41 522 2858) might be more suitable. Prices start at £50 for a double *en suite* (with breakfast), just yards from the action in San Marco. Some of Venice's many hotels claim not to reduce their rack rates, yet both the Firenze and the Danieli itself make substantial reductions, so do persevere.

Take a ride

Gondolas may be the classic symbol of romantic Venice but they're not cheap - they cost more than £30 an hour. On the other hand, the city's public transport, the vaporetto, are both inexpensive and fun. A trip along the Grand Canal, from Santa Lucia Station to San Marco, is a great introduction to Venice for just £150. Vaporetto No 1 zigzags up the canal, affording a clear view of the stunning buildings massed along it. The extraordinary architectural parade includes Venetian Baroque, Byzantine, classical, Gothic and late-Gothic styles. The Grand Canal is spanned by just three bridges, including the shop-lined Rialto, one of the city's most enduring symbols. The design reflects the 16th-century Venetian desire to demonstrate to the world its opulence and technical skill. A 24-hour vaporetto ticket costs around £5, a three-day ticket £10.

Take a hike

"A piedi" really is the way to discover a city which, by nature, demands a reasonable amount of legwork. The main tourist thoroughfare between the station and San Marco is well trodden, but duck down a side-alley into the back-streets and you'll soon find yourself in the "other" Venice. Parts of the city are empty of tourists even in high season and you can be lost for hours in the narrow, winding lanes, stumbling across seemingly forgotten churches squeezed into tiny squares, then stepping out blinking on to the broad sweep of the lagoon.

Lunch on the run

Try a *tramezzo*, one of Venice's fast food sandwich triangles, which

come crammed with every imaginable filling. They are served with lunch-time drinks in bars all over the city, for around £1.50, to eat standing up.

Cultural afternoon

Devote your afternoon to piazza San Marco, one of the world's most magnificent squares, dominated by St Mark's basilica and the Palazzo Ducale, buildings of superb quality and importance. The Basilica di San Marco with its colourfully chaotic facade is unique, having been built to house the remains of Saint Mark, stolen from Alexandria in 828AD. The exterior was continually added to over the centuries, the famous horses (now replicas) having been plundered from Constantinople in 1204. The interior of this grand cathedral is opulent in the extreme, with 4,000 square metres of mosaics adorning its walls.

Window shopping

Venice offers some great souvenirs amongst the usual tourist tat, including carnival masks and artwork. The streets of Merceria and Frezziera, close to San Marco, have a wide selection, but prices can be comparatively high. If you're especially keen on Venetian glass or lace, take the vaporetto out to the islands of Murano and Burano, the glass and lace centres respectively, where choice, quality and price are all superior.

An aperitif

Admire pizza San Marco from one of its many bars and cafés, such as Caffè Florian at No 56/59, Italy's oldest coffee house - expensive, but in terms of ambience you get what you pay for.

Dinner dinner

Considering the good reputation of Italian cuisine, Venice is a disappointment. As a general rule, the farther you go from the San Marco or station tourist traps, the lower the prices and often the better the quality. So search out one of the many small trattorie tucked away in the side streets and squares. Meals à la carte are expensive: the *menu turistico* is often worth trying.

Venetian cooking is relatively plain and features plenty of seafood. Risotto is perhaps the Venetian dish.

Sunday morning: go to church

Venice contains almost innumerable examples of religious architecture, yet the perfectly balanced proportions of the church of San Giorgio Maggiore stand out. Built in 1563, the church's white, temple-like facade provides a perfect antidote to the colourful grandeur of the basilica. The campanile, though not as tall as its San Marco rival, provides the best possible panorama over the city and lagoon.

Bracing brunch

Join the locals in one of Venice's osterie, modest bars serving wines by the glass, and *cicchetti* - bites such as deep-fried vegetables, stuffed olives and pâté.

A walk in the park

In a city so truly limited for room, open spaces are predictably few and far between. To escape the city's claustrophobia, take the vaporetto to Sant' Elena or walk along the front from San Marco to the quiet eastern districts and their parks. The spectacular views take in the Palazzo Ducale, San Giorgio Maggiore, and many of the lagoon's islands.

The icing on the cake

Italian ice-cream is justly renowned. Pick one up while strolling the streets, or warm up in one of the many parlours.

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In the wild at Woburn

The opening of Disney's Animal Kingdom in Florida may put Britain's safari parks in the shade. But, for Sarah Jewell and young friends, Bedfordshire still has some bite

Woburn Safari Park, set in the lush, green parkland of Woburn Abbey, was created by the Duke of Bedford in 1970 and has an impressive collection of dangerous and exotic animals. Lions, tigers, bears, wolves, rhinos and elephants roam around the grounds, originally landscaped by Humphrey Repton in the early 19th century.

There have been animals at Woburn (pronounced "Wooburn" by its nits and "Wohburn" by the rest of us) since 1811 when the sixth Duke established a menagerie of birds, antelopes and llamas. Giant woolly llamas still live in the park but the animals that cause the most excitement are undoubtedly the big cats that prowl alongside the cars. The only place where it is safe to walk about without fear of being gobbled up is the leisure area. Here children can let off steam in the adventure playgrounds or brush up their animal knowledge in the wild watch computer room, and there are lots more animals to see, including the squirrel monkeys in their newly-opened walk-through enclosure.

The visitors: Sarah Jewell took Tim Swan, a tourist, and his seven-year-old twin sons, Nat and Joe.

Sarah: Having lived in Africa as a child and visited game reserves with my father, a zoologist specialising in African wildlife, I was intrigued to find out what a British safari park would be like. I was delighted to see that although there is not the thrill of tracking the animals down (they are all on full view in the open country-side), it is still exciting to watch these beautiful animals wandering about uncaged. The sense of freedom is illusory but the huge, prehistoric-

shaped rhinos grazing quietly on the green grass seemed bovine contented and the pride of lions nesting against the hillside, with the wind blowing through their manes, looked proud and sleepy.

The African big game were untroubled by the huge, *Jurassic Park*-style security gates that keep them fenced in, but the Bengal tigers didn't seem so happy. Naturally solitary animals, there are eight of them pacing about - the result of an overtly successful breeding programme during the time when the park was managed by the Chipperfields (of circus fame); and the plan is to reduce their numbers, in the course of time, to a single pair. The wizened-faced Rhesus monkeys, by contrast, are emboldened by living in a big social group and they delight in playing gang warfare over the cars, jumping up on to the windscreens and pounding the roofs to howls of excitement from the human apes inside.

Chris Webster, chief executive of Woburn, says he wants to create as many "wow" moments as possible, and as we drove through the park the car was echoing to the word. For me, the real "wow" moment was seeing a huge black bear hug its round body around the base of a sheer pine tree and then haul its way up with extraordinary agility. I was amazed that such a heavy animal could be so graceful and it was thrilling to see this native of the forests of North America looking so relaxed in a rainy English safari park.

We couldn't resist driving around the safari circuit once more. On this trip a huge, perfect rainbow suddenly appeared in the sky over the aptly named Rainbow Landing aviary. It was the concluding "wow" moment to a delightful day.



Tim: We were at Woburn for six hours and there was not a single complaint from anyone. I liked the safari best, but it was good that there were the adventure hills as well so that the kids had somewhere to run around. I was impressed by the knowledge of the staff.

The safari was absolutely splendid. It was wonderful to see the animals from a glass box rather than in a glass box. We

drove around the park twice, in the morning and in the afternoon, and I liked seeing how the animals were behaving differently the second time around. The lions looked fabulous, like cool Rastas with their long manes. It was also very nice to see the animals looking so happy; it truly made a welcome change from other zoos where all too often the animals look miserable, caged in their pens.

Nate: Driving around was wicked. Best of all I liked the rhinos, monkeys, lions, bears, penguins and bison. I liked playing in the adventure park because it had a huge slide and I liked seeing the baby elephant pulling a log along the ground and lying down to be brushed by his keeper. It was good seeing the squirrel monkeys and it was wicked that we were the first children ever to go into their enclosure. I enjoyed feeding the

Cat's whiskers: tigers and lions are Woburn's chief attractions as they roar around the cars
Photograph: Philip Meech

parrots with nectar from a little pot. I would recommend visiting Woburn to absolutely anyone.

Joe: I liked driving around the safari circuits, and the way all the monkeys jumped on the car. And I liked seeing the bears up the trees, and the lions and tigers. The wolves looked like Alsatians but they don't run like Alsatians they trot. The rhinos were so big and strong but best of all I liked the hippo; it looked like a water pig but it was much bigger than a pig. The safari beats London Zoo because at the zoo you can't see the animals properly, as you have to look through bars. I would recommend it for anyone over three.

The deal: Woburn Safari Park, Woburn Park, Woburn (01525 290407) open daily 10am-5pm, adults £10.50, children £7 (family ticket concessions available).

How to get there: exit at Junction 13 of the M1. The park is clearly signposted from there.

Facilities: daily programme of animal talks and demonstrations; adventure playgrounds; Treetop action trail; Badger Valley play area for under fives; Jungles gift shop; Safari restaurant.

Other safari parks: West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Spring Grove, Bewdley (01299 402114); Whipsnade Wild Animal Park, Dunstable (0990 200123); Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, Port Lympne, Lympne, 101303 264647; Knowsley Safari Park, Prescot, Merseyside (0151 439009); Longleat Estate, Wiltshire (01985 844400).

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The north Norfolk coast offers varied views, rare bird life – and an English stately home. Emma Haughton takes a walk

This four-mile walk around Holkham, in north Norfolk, offers impressive contrasts in scenery. At one moment you'll be strolling along some of the wildest and most beautiful stretches of beach in the land, then, just minutes later, you'll find yourself walking through the gentle, landscaped grounds of one of England's most impressive stately homes.

Kicking off from the Victoria hotel in the centre of Holkham village, cross over the A149 into Lady Ann's Road, a tree-lined avenue leading past cattle and beef fields directly to the sea.

At the end of the road, turn left on to the earth track through the pines; you're now in the thick of Holkham National Nature Reserve, which covers nearly 4,000 hectares of Norfolk coast between Burnham Norton and Blakeney. The sandy beaches, inter-tidal mudflats and pine woodland that make up the reserve are a haven for a large variety of birds, many with romantic-sounding names such as redshank, bearded reedling, water rail, shelduck and pied flycatcher.

Once you have passed a small lake on your left, take a sharp right up the steep bank of sand dunes and head down towards the sea. Keep your eyes peeled, and you may even see the rare natterjack toad – distinguished by the light yellow stripe down its back – which lives in the dunes and lays its spawn in the nearest shallow pools.

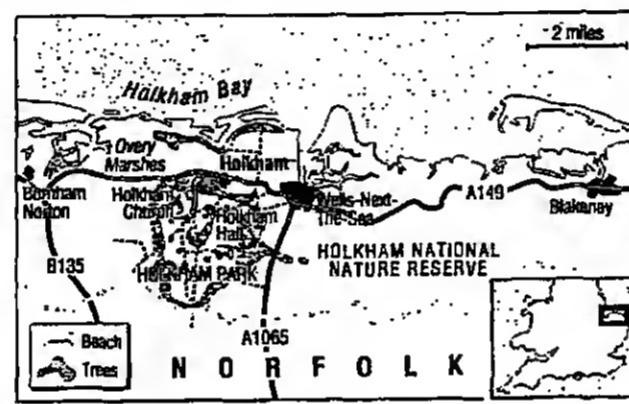
Bear left as you walk along the foreshore. In rough weather Holkham beach has an invigorating, elemental wildness that is guaranteed to blow the cobwebs from your soul; on fine days it transforms itself into the archetypal English beach, with yachts sailing in the bay, paddling children, and endless yellow sand encrusted with sea shells of every size and shape. At low tide the waves



Wild geese and philanthropy

dawdle along in lazy ripples, and the water remains so shallow that you can paddle for miles before it even reaches your knees.

Following the line of pines on your left, keep on past the first headland. As you turn the corner, brace yourself for the naturist section, but don't get too excited – just as things get interesting, you cut sharp left into the dunes back towards the pine forest, along the path where a sign politely requests nudists to keep to the beach. The sandy track takes you through the eerie gloom of pine



woods, home to countless grey squirrels that strip the cones and leave their remains on the forest floor.

When you come to a crossroads, keep heading south along the footpath, past the bird hide on your left. As you curve round into Bone's Drove, look just above the tree line and you'll see the tower of Holkham church and the tip of the Coke monument in Holkham Park, looking from this distance, uncannily like a pineapple balanced atop an Apollo rocket.

As you head towards the park,

you'll pass through Overy Marshes, in winter an important refuge for wildfowl such as pink-footed geese, brent geese and wigeon.

When you reach the A149 again, cross over and enter Holkham Park through the wrought-iron gates of Church Lodge. Turn almost immediately left through the mature oaks and chestnuts of Church Wood, skirt the tip of the large green lake on your right and head on into Staithe Wood. When you hit a junction, turn sharp right and you'll soon find yourself confronted by

the Coke monument, an elaborate, 120-ft tribute to Thomas Coke, who inherited the estate in 1776 and was regarded as virtually the patron saint of Norfolk farming. The monument was erected by public subscription: the life-size sculptures of a plough, a sheep, an ox and a seed drill that surround the central column (topped by bulls, leaves and turnips) refer to the revolutionary agricultural reforms Coke introduced in the early 19th century.

From the monument, head straight across the deer and sheep pastures to Holkham Hall, spread before you in all its majestic splendour. If you've got the time and the energy, you can take a tour inside and round off with a meal or a snack in the adjacent tea rooms; if you haven't, content yourself with the magnificent Palladian exterior of this historic 18th-century building, home to seven generations of the Earls of Leicester.

When you've had your fill of all this stateliness, head north towards the Almshouses Gate. Once over the cattle grid, take the left fork and head towards the trees. From the almshouses it's a short, straight walk down through the model village of Holkham, and back to the Victoria Hotel. If you're peckish, try its wide selection of sandwiches, ploughmen's lunches and hot meals, which you can wash down with a pint of Adam's beer or Addlestone's cider.

Map: Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 81 TF 84/94 (Wells-next-the-Sea and Burnham Market)

English Nature, which manages the nature reserve in conjunction with the Holkham estate, requests that visitors do not attempt this particular walk between November and March, when they risk disturbing the rare birds wintering in the marshes alongside Bone's Drove.

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Nature's way with animals

How do you apply homeopathic remedies to a cow with toothache? Or a gerbil that's off its nuts? Sally Williams meets a vet with a mission

People say unpleasant things about the country vet Chris Day: that he is a witch doctor, a bone shaker, a crank. They pick fights with him in veterinary journals. Some even demand that he resign from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

But then Chris Day - mid-fifties, grey, boyishly floppy hair, tweed jacket, comy cords and peculiar, Muttley-style laugh - is a homeopathic vet. Domestic cats, dogs, gerbils; farm cows, horses, pigs; even zoo elephants, rhinos and wild animals found sick or injured are all treated from his Alternative Veterinary Medicine Centre in Oxfordshire. "There is no animal," he says defiantly, "that can't be treated with alternative medicine."

But how exactly? There's more to homeopathic medicine than little pills with long names (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*, *Gelsemium sempervirens*); it's about getting to know the whole person as an individual - assessing personality, behaviour, job satisfaction, fingernails. How on earth do you return mind, body and spirit to a balanced state when your patient refuses to be examined (Chris even knocks them out with tranquillisers), let alone discuss its social background and psychological state?

"No, you can't ask the animal questions," agrees Chris, "or even discuss what sort of pain it's in. Does it ache or throb, or is it a shooting pain? But animals have a brain. They feel things. They have emotions." They also get eaten for dinner, but Chris doesn't see this as a reason not to treat them as "energetic wholes" before doing so. "We have a duty to animals, especially if we are exploiting them."

Can you tell whether a dog is happy or sad? "Of course," he replies. "A wet nose,

a waggy tail and a nice shiny coat make a picture of health. So anything short of that starts to become important." But isn't that a healthy dog, rather than a happy one? "Happiness and health are integrated. Mind and body are integrated. That's the fundamental thing." What about cows? "One is happy to chew the cud; another will try to break out. Same situation, different animal. I wouldn't treat mastitis in one the way I would in the other."

Hedgehogs, then? "Wild animals are more of a challenge, but just because you don't know how a hedgehog feels, doesn't mean you can't observe its behaviour and reactions."

A conventional consultation lasts around five minutes. Chris's run to three-quarters of an hour, and that's after Caroline, his PA, has booked them in. It's not just a case of name and address. "You get the whole spiel," she explains. "A blow-by-blow account of the animal's history, like or not."

Chris spends two days in the surgery and three on the road. He treats referrals only, and as most clients live some distance away, Chris will see them once and then deal with them by phone or letter. Animals are treated with the same homeopathic medicine as humans. Likewise acupuncture treatment, which is used on domestic animals - dogs, cats, horses, even goats and cattle. "Acupuncture treats the animal as an energetic whole," Chris comments.

So how does he set about assessing his patients? Take Smoky the cat, a former stray who has the feline form of Aids. The traditional vet advises that he should be put down. Chris has other thoughts. "Does Smoky like to be warm or cool?" he asks,

"Warm. He spends his whole time near the radiator," says his owner, Charlotte. "Good appetite?" "I'll say. Just look at him." "Stool or waterworks?" "Haven't a clue. He does it outside." "Does he have any fears?" "He jumps when I make a bang or move suddenly." "What sort of bowl does he drink from?" "Best Wedgwood china, of course." Charlotte knows that plastic bowls are full of nasty toxins. "What do you feed him?" "Felix and fresh fish." Whoops! Fish from the North Sea, the Irish Sea, the Mediterranean and fish farms are subject to worrying levels of toxins. Farmed fish suffer the additional disadvantage of being stressed. And really, Chris reminds her, what about the recommended organic chicken regime? But she's tried that. The cat didn't like it. And it's expensive.

Chris, of course, would never be so half-hearted. He is a total believer in 100 per cent Soil Association-approved feeding, and utterly convinced that he is always right. He lives and works with uninterrupted energy from home, a beautiful Norman barn with Queen Anne extensions, grows medicinal herbs in his walled organic vegetable garden, from which he steams carrots and finely grates herbs for his dog (or so he says in his snappily entitled booklet, *Feeding Dogs the Natural Way*) and is so convinced of the evils of conventional medicine that he even refuses to give his baby daughter "immunecystem-disturbing" inoculations.

And one little inconsistency that did not quite compute - eating meat - has now been sorted out. Not that Chris had a problem with eating meat as such. "It's part of life." It's just that one day he couldn't pull the trigger. He used to kill the beast himself, you see, rather than buying it pre-packed from Tesco. And the next day he couldn't. Nor

could his wife, and he wasn't going to pay someone else to do it, if he couldn't. So now he feels much more comfortable with himself. "You have to be consistent," he explains, "otherwise there is a stress."

Or rather, more stress. Making money the natural way is not easy. It costs Chris £700 a day to run the surgery (car, six staff) and, as Caroline points out, "we do not sell products, as conventional vets do. The cost of medicine is nothing. It's the time. And people are never keen to pay for time."

But enough of them do. Chris first set up the practice in 1987 and regularly starts at 4am to catch up on cases. Both his patients were vets and Chris decided, aged five, that he wanted to be one too. He was introduced to homeopathy in his teens by relations who were homeopathic doctors. He trained as a conventional vet (as all homeopathic vets have to) joined his

parents' practice in 1973 and started using homeopathy. It all "snowballed" from there.

He is now secretary of the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons - over 200 qualified membership 19 (and one of those works in South Africa). There are 250 qualified homeopathic doctors. But this could change. There is talk of introducing accredited courses at Bristol University and Glasgow University.

In the meantime there is just one course in Oxford, and the students who will graduate this summer. If they pass a further exam, the numbers of qualified homeopathic vets, Caroline predicts, could be up by at least two.

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There's more to medicine than meets the eye: 'Acupuncture treats animals as an energetic whole,' says vet Chris Day

Photograph: John Lawrence

A sting in the tale of the crayfish

When thousands of crayfish were found dead in the river Avon, sheep dip was immediately suspected. By Duff Hart-Davis

Early on the morning of Thursday, 17 April, Alan Jones went down, as he always does, to inspect the river Avon where it runs past his cottage in the village of Pinkney, Gloucestershire. To his consternation, he saw that the bottom of the stream was covered with dead and dying crayfish; many were upside down, and those still the right way up were barely moving.

Alan - a carpenter and lecturer in construction techniques - has lived there, and fancied the crayfish, for most of his life. Indeed, when he was a boy his family frequently ate them; but since they became a protected species he has been an observer only. It was immediately clear to him that some ecological disaster had taken place, for until then the Sherstoo Avon had been one of the few remaining habitats in which native crayfish



Under threat: the English crayfish

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

survive. He therefore rang the Environment Agency's emergency line, and within 15 minutes an expert arrived.

At first biologists feared that the mortality was due to the plague imported by American crayfish early in the Eighties - a fungal disease, carried by spores, against which the English species has no resistance. So deadly is it that when it got into the Hampshire Avon it killed the entire population - millions - in the space of two weeks.

Plague, however, was ruled out by analysis of bodies recovered from the river near

Sherston, which showed that the killer agent had been the insecticide cypermethrin, used in sheep dips and sprays. Today, nearly a month after the incident, the hunt is still on for the source of the poison, which has wiped out not only the crayfish but also most other invertebrates along at least three miles of the waterway.

Initial suspicion fell on recently-dipped sheep upstream at Badminton, where drainage ditches - known as winter-born streams - wind through lush watermeadows and run into

the river. The chemicals used in dips are so toxic that even if a sheep merely strays, or falls into the water, it can wipe out all invertebrate life for 100 yards or more. In the past few days, however, the agency's investigating officers have been concentrating on other possibilities.

Compared with the catastrophe of the burst dam in the Coto Donana, this is a disaster in miniature. Nevertheless, it is intensely disappointing for British conservationists, as an enormous effort has gone into preserving the integrity

of the Sherstoo Avon, and several batches of healthy crayfish have been taken from there to restock less fortunate stretches of the river.

Not that all the work has pleased local people; many have objected to the fences recently built along the river to preserve the banks and keep farm animals out of the stream. Wooden posts and barbed wire, they say, spoil the appearance of the gentle valley. Perhaps they do - but they also prevent

encroachment by cattle, reduce erosion and improve the habitat for many river creatures, not least crayfish and water voles. Feelings about the foeces run so high that hints have been dropped about possible sabotage; could someone have deliberately dumped something in the river to settle scores with the agency?

That seems pretty far-fetched. Yet certain it is that the people who began bringing crayfish from America have a lot to answer for, because the imports produced a classic illustration of the folly of introducing alien species into an environment that lacks the controls and balances to keep them in check. Like the grey squirrel, the mink and the rainbow trout, the American signal crayfish is by no means a welcome immigrant. Being

larger than our own, more aggressive, and omnivorous, it has spread relentlessly through our river systems, eradicating the natives by eating them, driving them off their own territory, and giving them a fatal disease.

At one stage signals were widely advertised as a fine commercial proposition. Anyone who owned a pond was incited to farm them: seed the pond with nippers, you were told, and in a couple of years, at no further cost, you could haul out lobsters. What nobody realised was that signals are amphibious; on wet nights they take to the fields and crawl overland into streams. So they invaded our rivers, with disastrous effect.

Some of them are resistant

to the plague, and may survive indefinitely. Why, then, should they not eventually replace our native stocks? "Because our freshwater fauna have evolved over thousands of years, since the last ice age, to live in harmony with each other," says Dr Nick Giles, a freshwater fisheries consultant. "Nobody knows whether, in the long run, signals will fit in." As a black mark against them he cites their habit of clipping off weed near the bed of the stream - something English crayfish do not do - and so clearing whole patches of habitat.

No one is yet sure what the long-term effects of the pollution at Sherston may be.

Alan Jones noticed that the brown trout, which he feeds every morning, showed no interest in his offerings for the next three days. Then they appeared to recover their appetites - but what is going to happen to their offspring? The insecticide also wiped out mayfly larvae: Martin Frayling, the agency officer first on the scene, saw "hundreds of thousands of them dead on the river bed". The main food supply for trout fry and other small fish has gone.

Whatever the outcome, all river managers remain acutely aware that farmers are regularly using substances so poisonous that even extremely low concentrations are lethal.

What, when, where ...

The airwaves will be buzzing on 10 May, which is National Mills Day. On Sunday, the Furness amateur radio society will operate a special CB radio event from its headquarters in Gleaston Mill, an 18th-century water mill whose origins were in the Middle Ages.

There are about 400 wind and water mills open to the public in the UK, more than 60 of which are in working order. The special event radio station (call sign GB2GWW) will make links with 80 to 90 mills both here and abroad.

Last year mills from The Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland and South Africa

took part. If you're not a CB fan, you can watch the Furness clog dancers, and take in a converted cowshed, and view an archaeological dig (Mesolithic), as well as examining the clasp-arm pit wheel, the largest in the country, as you watch Gleaston Mill in action.

Gleaston Water Mill, Gleaston, near Ulverston, Cumbria (0129 869244, <http://www/waterrmill.co.uk>), is open 10am-5pm, admission to mill £1.50 (accompanied children free on Mills Day).

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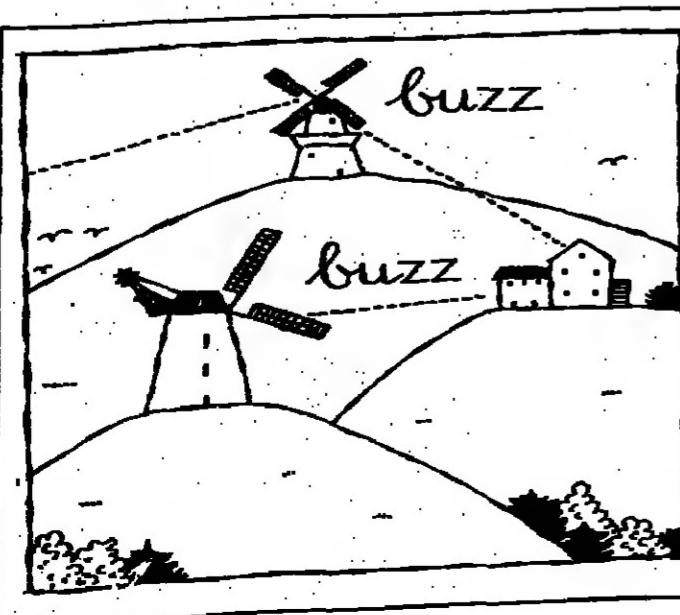
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A spot of pot training

Never mind the plants, what about the troughs, compost, fertilisers and more ... Ursula Buchan advises on how to plan the patio for the best summer display

As if driven by some communal atavistic urge, gardeners in late spring rush to empty every pot and tub in the garden (whether their contents are still flowering or not) and replace them with summer flowers. It would appear that, by early May, we cannot wait to be rid of all those fresh yellows, blues and acid greens, in favour of the warmer, richer colours of high summer. Hardiness no longer seems the cardinal virtue it was in February, now that the frosts seem to be over for good.

The frosts seem to be over for good. Everything conspires to egg us on. Garden centres, nurseries, florists, even supermarkets and garage forecourts, are full to bursting now with "summer bedding" or "patio" plants, those frost-tender annuals and perennials which are naturally suited to, or have been expensively bred for, pot culture. They come into flower quickly, once planted, and go on flowering in hectic profusion until late summer and sometimes until the autumn frosts.

Garden centres are so geared up to container gardening that all the kit that you need (pots, compost, fertilisers and planting combinations) are provided, thus removing the last vestige of anxiety. You have nothing to lose but the contents of your wallet, and this can be a very colourful, positive, fun way to garden.

Cassandra that I am, I cannot refrain from one or two mild warnings. If you heed them, you may make your own pot luck.

To begin with, there is no rush about this. Even now, it is unlikely that most gardeners (especially in country areas) have seen the last frosts. Anyone who lives in a cold district will have to put their planted containers under cover - at least at first. Everyone else would be well advised to leave them somewhere sheltered but not in a frost pocket.

That way, there is less risk of damage to those tender annuals such as tobacco plants (*nicotiana*), which have big, fleshy leaves and often benefit from a bit more hardening off before encountering the rigors of the open garden. After all, most plants are pro-

If you are not experienced in the arts of patio gardening, the first things you need to buy are pots. I am afraid that there is simply

first things you need to buy are pots. I am afraid that there is simply no substitute for spending good money on them. The nicest (and, incidentally, most substantial and stable) are, generally, the most expensive. To take liberties with an old head-gardener's saying:



Well contained: patio combinations of lobelia, petunia and viola, top far left; petunia and pelargonium, below far left; pelargonium and oenothera, left; pelargonium plus begonia and chrysanthemum, below left

Photographs: Garden Picture Library

"A penny for the plant, a pound for the plant-container"
The choice of what to plant, and how many of them, requires some thought, and time spent on research is not wasted. However, garden centres usually have people on hand to advise, and the optimum spacing of plants in containers should appear on the large bench label, even if not always on the smaller pot labels.

A notebook is invaluable.
It is always tempting to buy plants already in flower. But a flowering "plug" plant in a small tray is a vegetable cry for help. Faced with possible extinction from lack of food or water, its response is to flower and seed in a hurry. Buy the dull-looking, green-leaved ones where you can.

You will need to buy a reputable multi-purpose potting compost based on a peat substitute, such as composted wood bark, in which to put the plants for their five-month sojourn. This year, for the first time, you also have the choice of buying one that contains a systematic and contact insecticide called Intercept. Lexington's Plant Protection Compost is more expensive than conventional ones (£5.99 to £6.49 for 50 litres), and has not yet received Ministry clearance for edible plants (so no good for herbs, or patio strawberries) but it offers control of aphids for three months, and of fungus gnats and vine weevils for 12 months.

If you choose a conventional compost, it is worth considering water-retaining polyacrylamide granules, such as Swellgel, to add to it; if mixed thoroughly with the compost, which is then watered well before the plants are put in, they should allow greater intervals between waterings. I also recommend a "controlled-release" fertiliser such as Osmocote Plus tablets, to put on the surface of the compost after planting. The resin coats of these aggregated granules gradually disintegrate, releasing balanced fertiliser steadily, over five or six months. They work fastest in warm conditions, when the plant will be growing most actively. Chempak's Food and Drink and Growcroft's Basketmate offer an ingenious and labour-saving mix of water-retaining and fertiliser granules.

The advantage of these technological innovations is that, provided that the manufacturers' instructions are followed, modern pot culture now makes falling off a log look like a frighteningly complex operation. It is displaying pots to their full advantage which can prove tricky.

But that's another story.

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From pot pourri to pot roast

A taste of ... lavender
from Norfolk, by
Nikki Spencer

Lavender may be strongly associated with scenting clothes, but in fact it has also been used in cooking for hundreds of years – and is currently undergoing something of a revival. More and more chefs are using the pungent flower to flavour fish, lamb, sorbet and other foods, and this summer the New Covent Garden Soup Company is producing Potato, Leek and Lavender Soup for sale in grocery shops and supermarkets all over the country.

East Anglia is particularly suited to growing lavender because of its dry, light and sandy soil, according to Henry Head, managing director of the UK's largest commercial grower, Norfolk Lavender – although after the heavy rain last month he says that now he's not so sure. Dry weather from now until the end of July is the key to a good harvest. "I'd be very happy to see another drop of rain," he says.

The family firm started growing lavender back in 1932, extracting oil for use in perfumery and drying flowers for pot pourri and

– more recently – for culinary purposes. The tea room at the company's headquarters at Caley Mill in Heacham sells lavender scones, lavender tea and lavender ice-cream, as well as jars of lavender marmalade.

Up on the coast at Wells-next-the-Sea, a passionate advocate of lavender in cooking is Carla Phillips, who runs The Moorings restaurant with her husband Bernard.

"Anything you can use rosemary for is pretty good with lavender, only it has more strength and vigour," enthuses Carla. She puts dried lavender (or fresh, when it's available) into salt water to flavour steamed fish, and uses it as a marinade with lemon and garlic on loin of lamb. She also makes an aromatic oil with lavender, steeping a sprig in oil with garlic and salt and pepper, to use a few weeks later on salads, or with mashed potato.

However, Carla warns against getting carried away with the idea of lavender as an ingredient. "Lavender is quite powerful and I

believe it works best when it is used subtly in savoury recipes. I think a sweet lavender sauce, for example, would be foul."

Lavender trails

• Norfolk Lavender, Caley Mill, Heacham (01485 570384) is open to the public, admission free, daily except Christmas Day. From mid-June to August you can see more than 100 acres of lavender in bloom by joining minibus tours of the fields (cost £3.95). From mid-July you can also see the distilling process, whereby the lavender is made into oil. As well as the tea rooms, the 19th-century mill has a garden centre and a shop that sells dried lavender flowers for cooking. The company also runs a mail-order service (01507 466466).

• The Moorings, 6 Freeman Street, Wells-next-the-Sea (01328 710949) is open from Thursday to Monday. Owner and chef Carla Phillips has written a book in conjunction with Norfolk Lavender entitled *Herbs from a Norfolk*

Kitchen – available for £3 plus 85p p&p from Norfolk Lavender.

• Two other Norfolk restaurants that use lavender regularly are Coughham Hall Hotel, Grimston, King's Lynn (01485 600250), where the owner, Christine Forecast, grows more than 30 different varieties of lavender in her herb garden (open to the public daily 2pm-4pm, free); and Roccoco, 11 Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn (01553 771483) where lavender and gin ice-cream is usually on the menu.

• The New Covent Garden Soup Company's Potato, Leek and Lavender Soup, made with fresh lavender flowers, will be available from 27 July to 9 August, price £1.49 for a carton.

Nectar of the Aztecs: in our article on chocolate, published on 4 April, we mentioned the Musée du Cacao et du Chocolat. Please note that the exhibition building – at 13 Grand Place, B 1000 Brussels – is currently undergoing refurbishment and is not open to the public until 1 July.



Purple haze: the tradition of using lavender as a flavouring is being revived

Photograph: Brian Harris

Flowers good enough to eat

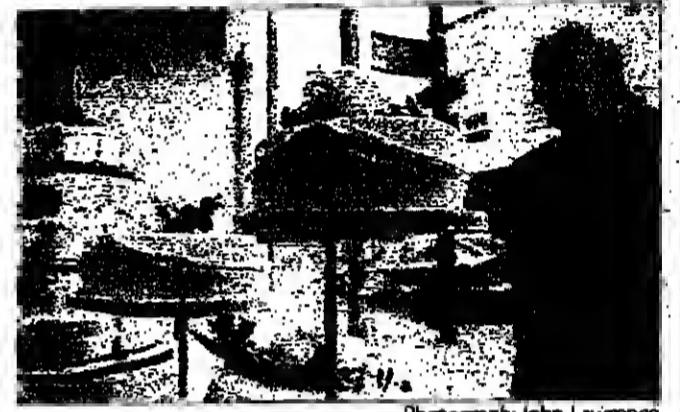
The stuff of ... cakes. Sally Staples discovers the delicate art of sugar craft

Here is a shop that will solve the dilemma of whether to buy a wedding cake or learn to make one. Cortell and Barratt, specialists in the delicate art of sugar craft, offer both custom-made cakes and classes in how to decorate them yourself.

June Whitchello and her husband Ron began their business 14 years ago. On display in a conservatory behind the shop – where classes are held – is a cabinet containing examples of sugar flowers that might pass muster if exhibited at Kew Gardens lilies, roses, gardenias, fuchsias, orchids, petunias. Every detail is there, from yellow-gold stamens at the centre of each flower, to the delicate twigs and leaves. The demand is growing for sugar flowers, and if you have a mind to try them yourself, June says she can teach a pupil in a single day.

In the shop, every cake-perfecting gadget is available to buy. The Whitchellos are the sole importers to the UK of special occasions. Classes for beginners cost from £20.

Cortell and Barratt, 40 High Street, Ewell, Surrey KT17 1RW (0181-393 0032). Open Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri 9am-5pm, Wed 9am-1pm, Sat 9am-4pm



Photograph: John Lawrence

GAMES

CROSSWORD PUZZLERS OUT FOR A DUCK: DON MANLEY EXPLAINS HIMSELF

Some of you reading this article will have been guided across from the crossword puzzle in this week's *Isrn*. Some, I have no doubt, will be angry, some sad, and some perhaps even amused. Others may have hit this piece purely by chance.

The fact is that I have achieved – if "achieved" is the right word – something quite unusual, and have been invited by my long-suffering crossword editor, Louise Levene, to give an account of myself. In puzzle 149, published on 18 April (*Isrn*), I invited solvers to fill in some squares with clashing letters "to accord with the shape they make", adding that "a final mark should be added at an appropriate intersection of two grid lines". The shape (*see Isrn*) looked like a K knocked over. I assumed that readers would interpret it as a π (pi) and work out (perhaps following the hint in the puzzle's title "More or Less") the numerical differences between the clashing letters.

Thus, at the bottom of the pi the second 1 of IMAGINE in 26 down is three away from the second L of LILY at 41 across, so "3" is entered. Progressing up the leg of the pi, we get 3141, then 59... along the top and 7932 down the bottom leg. When you add the decimal point after the opening

digit, you get 3.141592... the value of π . Clever stuff! Obviously too clever for all eight or nine bunched entrants.

Looking back, I can see that the shape of the pi is a bit inaccurate, and perhaps in my day job as a maths editor I am used to seeing too many hand-written approximations to this transcendental wonder. But surely the shape wasn't that bad, and a few mathematicians would have seen what I was driving at? Alas, I miscalculated.

There has long been a tradition of providing impossible or near-impossible crosswords. Two *Listener* puzzles spring to mind: in one crossword by "Afrit" in the Thirties or Forties, the publication expressed regret that none of its readers connected "Lombardy" and "Man of Words" with *The Cardinal's Snuff Box* at 28 across – a connection which some of us still fail to make; and about 20 years ago there was a puzzle entitled "Lip Service" by Leon, which involved playing a game of solitaire and spelling out the inscription on the Blarney Stone.

Afrit was a master working out the rules of a new game; Leon was probably too clever for his own good. So where does that place Duck? I'm in the

Leon camp, though I suspect Leon knew what he was doing. I guess that, despite over 30 years of setting, I didn't. I am as dumbfounded by the zero correct entries as the bapless solvers who failed to recognise the malformed mathematical symbol. But my feelings to be honest, are mixed: I'm tempted to be excited at having fooled everyone, but reckon I should feel guilty at baving spoiled everyone's fun.

Only two more things need to be said. One is that we need to explore the new and strange in crosswords to keep the game alive; the other is that no one should ever set out deliberately to produce a puzzle that will stump all the solvers. On that charge I plead innocent, so my apology to *Isrn* enthusiasts has some qualification. For most of the time, the setter must expect to be a gracious loser in a battle of wits in a contest that has a fair set of rules and conventions. That is how the battle is normally conducted in the *Isrn* puzzle, and indeed all the puzzles in *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*.

Don Manley contributes as 'Duck' to 'Isrn'. His less-than-impossible puzzles appear weekly in the 'Independent on Sunday', in the guise of Quaxote.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Lord Grade, 91, film maker, producer, the Grade Company

We used to have races at school. I was a good, fast runner, but I never made it a part of my career. At the time, I had no idea what I was going to do, and certainly didn't know that I'd finish up in the entertainment industry.

If I could play anything, I would have liked to be a good tennis player. I had a house with a tennis court one time, but I wasn't any good, so I knew that it wasn't a natural thing for me. When you play games, you have to feel at ease with them.

I've tried golf, but unfortunately I just could not hit the ball, so I thought, why drive myself crazy? There's no point in anyone trying to play a game that they don't take to naturally.

When I was 18 years old I discovered the sport of dancing, and became an exceptional Charleston dancer. To begin with, I was a ballroom dancer. I wasn't very good, and it was hard to get a partner. But

when I started to Charleston, the girls were lining up to dance with me.

I learned to do intricate steps, because my father – as you probably know – was born in Russia. He was a very good Cossack dancer, and when I became a dancing act – which I was for eight years before I became an agent – I incorporated a lot of those steps that they do as Cossack dancers into my routines.

I am still the world Charleston champion. I won the competition at the Royal Albert Hall on 15 December 1926 and I learned only recently that one of the judges was Fred Astaire. If I'd known he was watching, I'd probably have failed with nerves.

Grade Productions produced 'On Golden Pond' and 'Sophie's Choice'. Their latest film, 'Something to Believe In', was released in the UK yesterday by Warner Bros. Maria Pitillo and William McNamara star with Tom Conti, Maria Schneider and Ian Barbour.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all; dealer South

North
♦S 6
♥Q 10 5
♦10 7 6 3
♣K 8 6 5

West
♦A 10 9 4
♥9 7 2
♦8 5 2
♣7 4 3

East
♦7 3 2
♥8 6 4 3
♦A 9 4
♣A Q 2

South
♦K O J 5
♥A K J
♦K O J
♣J 10 9

Oh dear! I shall have to give up offering well-meant advice and stick strictly to reporting facts. This deal produced a peccy letter from a correspondent.

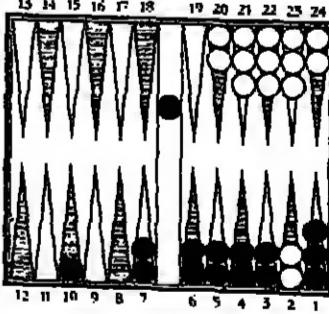
The bidding was simple: South opened Two No-trumps and North raised to game. West led ♦4 against Three No-trumps, obviously following my recent suggestion that the lead of a ten against a no-trump contract implied a strong suit with two higher honours. Dummy followed with the six and East (who had clearly noticed my other recent point, that rather than make an apparently useless attempt with near-garbage in partner's suit, it was more useful to give a count) thoughtfully played the two to suggest a three-card holding.

When ♦6 won, declarer still had two guards in spades and he attacked clubs. Now it was too late for the defenders to get a long card in any suit working and they came to only the four obvious tricks (a spade, a diamond and two clubs).

Yes, the lead of ♦10 defeats the contract when West ducks his partner's next spade return. Yes, East could have done everything that was necessary by covering ♦6 with his seven at trick one after which, again, West ducks the next spade return.

But the real culprit on the hand was declarer! Why? He really should have tried ♦8 from dummy at trick one – a play that could hardly cost and would have provided an unexpected third stopper in spades.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Here's a position that confronted Murray "Quickdouble" Sharp at the Double Fives the other night. Murray, playing Black, had not only doubled early but had also accepted the double when all around him in the chouette had very sensibly passed. In his own inimitable style he had turned the game round to reach the position above. Should he redouble to 8?

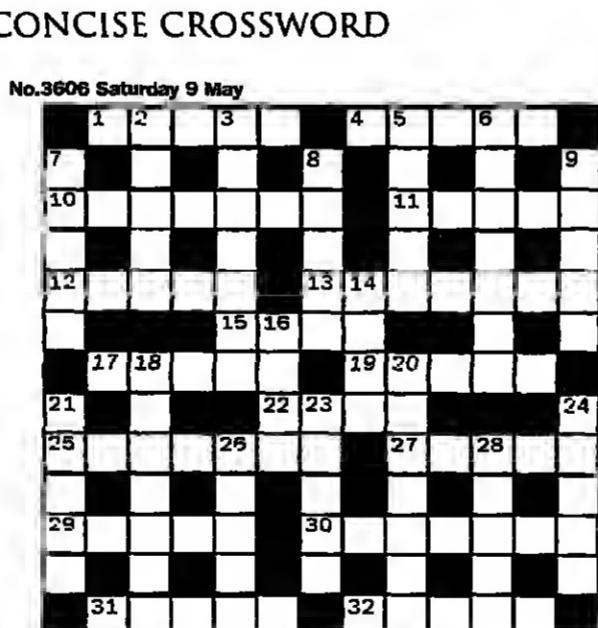
The position is highly volatile and could change dramatically over the next two rolls. If Murray enters with any 6, White will be all but lost. Conversely, if he stays on the bar and White rolls a 6 then all the pressure will be on Murray. Most people have a natural fear of doubling from the bar against a 5-point board but Quickdouble is not of this ilk, and he redoubled with hardly a moment's thought. His opponent took Quickdouble rolled 63 and comfortably won the game. The question is: were the double and take correct?

The answer is that this is an excellent benchmark position. Black should double and White should take. If White were any weaker, for example if he had only a 4-point, or if he had a blot exposed on his 6-point, then he should drop.

How do you evaluate this over the board? Black should note that if he rolls a 6, or he stays on the bar and then White doesn't roll a 6, he will become a prohibitive favourite, so now is the time to double. White should note that if Black doesn't roll a 6 and White does roll a 6, then he will have a very strong position. As this will happen nearly 25 per cent of the time, this gives him enough chances to take.

The final point to make is that success goes to players who are good at applying pressure. Quickdouble Sharp certainly did that in this position, applying exactly the right pressure at the right time.

CONCISE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Ho-goat (5)
4 Broadcasting (2,3)
10 Stir (7)
11 Inexpensive (5)
12 Correct (5)
13 Make a list of (7)
15 Solemn word (4)
17 Convulsive movement (5)
19 Call to mind (5)
22 Long, bushy hair (4)
25 Masculinity (?)
27 Heat unit (5)
29 Rough hut (5)
30 First (7)
31 Burglar's tool (5)
32 Gemstone (15)

DOWN
2 Cake topping (5)
3 Outbuildings (4-3)
5 Mother-of-pearl (5)
6 Climber's aid (3-4)
7 Forces captain (5)
8 Sun, owing (5)
9 Ruptility (5)
14 At that time (41)
16 Rounds for firearms (coll.) (4)
18 Nom-de-plume (3-4)
20 Banning (7)
21 Gather (5)
23 Unscripted remark (2,3)
24 Walk slowly (5)
26 Caulking material (5)
28 Decree (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 5 Wreck, 6 Amend, 9 Image, 10 Campaign, 11 Urrn, 14 Sny, 16 Embark, 17 Estate, 18 Inn, 20 Alone, 22 Smallpot, 25 Of, 26 Alleluia, 27 Tving, DOWN: 1 Watch, 2 Gemic, 3 Ideas, 4 Knight, 6 Ruminate, 7 Cogitate, 12 Small, 13 Maintain, 14 Skii, 15 Yen, 19 Nameless, 21 Elder, 22 Sprout, 23 Ex-pat.

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

Of all the many changes that have taken place in the chess world over the past three decades – the schism in the world championship, the bad influence of rapid play events on the general quality of play, the pernicious effects of computer analysis, and the introduction of the ludicrous Bobby Fischer Chess Clock among them – the one I find most depressing is the extinction of cheap chess sets made of French boxwood at the hands of an even less expensive plastic variety.

I say this not through any particular aesthetic delight at the tactile qualities of wood or a dislike of plastic itself. It's just the shape of the wooden knights' ears that miss. The disappearance of the boxwood sets, you see, has deprived me of my one great claim to a place in chess history. For I was the first person ever, as far as I know, to pile an entire chess set on top of a single rook. And thanks to the despicable new plastic sets, that is an art that has totally died out.

You start with a rook (conventionally a white one, though black would, I suppose, be equally acceptable) placed normally on any square of a chessboard. The crenellations around its battlements provide the notches on which four pawns may be hung in a manner that allows the tops of the pawns to form the base for the next level.

Now comes the clever bit. Take two knights, two bishops and one rook. If you hang the knight muzzles over the rook's battlements, you will find they stay in place. And they become even more stable if you tuck a bishop in under each of their bellies. (Point the two bishops in opposite directions for general stability.) The entire rook-plus-four-minor-pieces combination may then be balanced upon the four pawns on the original rook. Not only were the boxwood sets perfectly weighted for this to work, but the ears of the knights, perfectly friskily upwards, left a four-point horizontal base for the next level.

So another rook, two bishop and two knights are disposed of in similar manner, leaving us with two queens, two kings and 12 pawns. It's a little tricky, but you can get rid of two of the pawns between the ears of the knights. Delicately placed, they are light enough not to upset the balance, and their position becomes more stable when the next level is added.

Three pawns can be hung round each queen's head, again forming a level triangular base of pawn-tops for the next story. At the very top two kings may be suspended by their crosses on those very useful crenellations of the final rook. The last four pawns may be balanced on assorted bishops, with one or two even on the topmost rook between the kings.

The execution of this fine pile took me most of my fourth year at Cambridge. Then the sets went out of fashion and my hope for eternal fame vanished with them.

Clocking the sun

If you want to use a sundial to tell the time, writes Caroline Donald, make sure it is custom-built for your garden – or you may find inaccuracies creeping in

As we hurtle towards the year 2000, how we measure time gains a special significance. So it was with a sense of satisfaction that I sought out David Harber, maker of sundials, at his Oxford workshop. The millennium bug may be a cause of increasing concern, yet the sun will rise and set regardless of computer crashes, and Harber's dials will continue to measure the hours, using methods first discovered thousands of years before Christ effectively started the whole millennium business.

Harber's works range from a simple obelisk that casts a shadow on markers set in the ground, to a copper hemisphere resembling a tilted mortar that is engraved with the hours and the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn and owes its origins to Berossos, an Egyptian priest, who worked out the earth's circumference to within 500 miles, 300BC. "Over here, in AD1400 we still thought that we would fall off the edge," says Harber.

Having left Dartington school at 15, Harber discovered at first hand that the Earth is round when he learnt to fly. Meanwhile he also acquired metalwork skills while running a travelling theatre group on a boat in France. And then "it all suddenly gelled. I bought a book on how to make sundials and the end result was my first armillary sphere, which was snapped up." Today, these armillary spheres, which look like a cross between an old-fashioned globe and a ball of string, are his best-selling line, with prices from about £1,500 for a brass one (they also come in bronze and stainless steel). This may seem a hit steep, but all his dials are custom-built, and marked with mottoes and measurements that are important to the client.

"You can move them to a degree," says Harber, relishing the unintentional pun, "but they need to be in the exact location to work absolutely accurately. You can move them north and south quite easily, but they start to get inaccurate if you shift them east and west. For instance, there is a four-minute difference between the time when the sun overhead in Greenwich and in Oxfordshire."

From the spot in Greenwich or Oxfordshire, Edinburgh or Timbuktu, the dial can be inscribed with the exact direction and number of miles to a significant place for a client anywhere in the world. "Invariably, they are exotic," says Harber. "We don't get many pointing to Milton Keynes."

The tradition of mottoes goes back to the days when sundials were the only form of time-keeping in a community, and were usually erected by the local squire or a

scholar. "They were seen as oracles, the voice of something ethereal and spiritual," says Harber.

He provides a list for clients taken from dials of the past, usually exhorting the reader not to be a wastrel, or reminding him in a cheeky way that death is just around the corner, though the translation given for *carpe diem* – Ah, take the cash in hand and waive the rest – is more an example of the blithe sense of humour of Harber and his wife Sophie (who runs the business side of things) than of their linguistic skills.

Although they look simple, Harber's wall-mounted dials, similar to those you see on churches and manor houses, are painstakingly calculated for that wall alone.

He is as polite as he can be about the mass-produced sundials you can buy at garden centres: "It's nice that people are interested, but it seems a shame to spend your money on something that doesn't fulfil its purpose. There was a batch that came over from the Far East, where the gnomon [the shadow-caster] had been made for an obscure latitude somewhere below the latitude of the south of France, and fixed the wrong way round, so they were never going to tell the time."

At the moment Harber is making a slate-and-copper wall dial especially for his stand at the Chelsea Flower Show. It has been mathematically calculated exactly to mark noon for the occasion – a risky move, but an impressive one if it comes off, in front of the world's smartest horticultural clientele.

When we met, Harber was about to set off for Chicago to unveil an armillary sphere for a bank, then on to Martha's Vineyard for another installation. "Most of the people I meet are really interesting," he says of his necessarily financially comfortable clientele (though prices start at a not-too-unreasonable £500). "They want to put some thought into what they are commissioning. What you say on a dial should be done glibly; it is going to be there for quite a while."

In June, he completes a sundial for a private client made from monoliths of 150-million-year-old Jurassic stone that will mark the positioning of the planets around the sun at dawn on 1 January, AD2000. It will take 27,000 years for these positions to repeat. Now that is quite a while.

David Harber Sundials (01491-576956; fax: 01491-413524; e-mail: sales@harber-sundials.demon.co.uk; website: www.harber-sundials.demon.co.uk)



Sun king:
David Harber
at his Oxford
workshop with
retro-tech
sundials.
"Invariably,
they are
exotic. We
don't get many
pointing to
Milton Keynes"
Photograph: Peter
Macdiarmid

Join the gleam team

Sally Staples brightens up her life and her furniture on a French polishing course

If you have any old furniture that seems past redemption and has been stashed away in an attic, think again. In just a few hours you could learn how to strip away a dull or stained surface and use the skills of traditional French polishing to bring a glossy shine to an old table or chair – or, indeed, any piece of wood that needs a new lease of life.

All that's required is that you bring to six three-hour sessions a pair of rubber gloves, some protective clothing and the item that needs restoration.

Martin Masterson, the French polisher and tutor who runs a course at London's Kensington and Chelsea adult education college, will provide students with all the other materials for just £5 a head. These include steel wool, methylated spirits, old rags, white spirit, sandpaper and the French polish itself.

Stripping the wood is the initial task, and on the day I was there a group of 10 stood round to watch as Martin illustrated the technique on an oak breakfast tray. The first stage is to remove all the traces of the old polish or varnish. With antique furniture that has been French polished, this is usually done with meths. But modern pieces that have been lacquered or varnished need to be treated with paint stripper.

Martin rubbed a meths-soaked rag all over the tray's surface until it became a little

sticky. Then he took some steel wool and rubbed from side to side, following the grain of the wood as the polish was gradually removed. Once the tray's surface was quite pale, coarse sandpaper was used to remove any scratches and dents in the wood. Next it was sanded down with fine paper to regain the smooth surface.

Using gentle movements Martin demonstrated how to retain some of the natural irregularities. Part of the attraction of wood is that some marks are visible

At that stage the students set about stripping their own pieces of furniture. Troy Colombo had brought in a large mahogany box once used by an architect for pens and pencils. Loulou Kuschke had a rosewood box and other students had variously brought a bedside table, a six-legged stool and a box made from beech.

Everyone worked at their own pace, and Martin walked round the class giving advice and preparing for the next stage: staining the wood.

"If you go into shops, they will try to sell you dozens of different colours for staining wood," he said. "But in fact all you need are

two basic colours – dark oak and red mahogany. By mixing and diluting these two you can achieve almost any colour you want."

Martin explained that the mahogany box should not be painted with the mahogany stain, as the effect would be too red. Instead he recommended a dark oak stain. As all the stains are oil based, they should be diluted with

turpentine or white spirit when necessary. Once the box was painted with the dark oak stain, and the excess wiped off, it was almost ready for polishing. But first a little sanding down was advised.

Martin demonstrated how this could be done using gentle movements to retain some natural irregularities. Part of the attraction of wood is that some marks are visible, giving character to the piece.

Since the course concentrates on traditional French polishing, there are no short cuts to learning the art of making what is called the "rubber" to polish the piece of furniture. Martin gave a demonstration of this by folding a

piece of wadding inside a rag and moulding it with his thumb and finger into the shape of a mouse. The rag must be free of lint, to avoid bits of fabric sticking on to the wood during polishing.

Before the rubber comes into play, a special polishing mop made from camel hair is used to coat the surface with a full-strength solution of the polish, which should be diluted by one-third to two with methylated spirits. The second and subsequent layers are put on with the rubber, and the polishing must be done in a figure of eight to keep the layers thin and evenly distributed.

A drop of linseed oil is added to the wood to lubricate the polish, and the process is repeated many times until the required effect is achieved.

The final touches involve removing the oil from the polish by squeezing the rubber several times in undiluted polish and gently wiping over the surface until all oil traces are gone. Students are advised to leave their furniture dry for at least a week before using it.

The French polishing course at Kensington and Chelsea College, London, (0171-573 5333) runs for six weeks and costs £69. Martin Masterson also runs a course on decorative surfaces which includes tortoiseshell, crackle glazing, marbling and wood graining.



Shining example: a French polisher at work. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

There are more interesting things than sport on a Saturday afternoon.
Murder, for instance.

THE SATURDAY PLAY continues with "The Body Snatchers" at Dartmouth Drama, Devon, on Saturday, 10pm, on BBC2. Dr Gethin Jones' "An Evening with..." at the Almeida, 8pm–4am.

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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Wham, bam, thank you fans, then pile in for the celebrations



MIKE ROWBOTTOM
ON THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF FOOTBALL VIDEOS

THERE are so many little ways in which one can make family life run more smoothly: No shouting down or interrupting during meal times, no playing with Space Invader games or virtual pets after supper time. No singing after bedtime.

These are innovations which, due to local resistance, I have yet to establish in my household. But in time I feel confident that I shall mention them again... In the meantime, however, one Good Idea has taken hold, a means of avoiding those wearing and ultimately pointless, arguments about who recorded over whose programme on what tape. The solution is simple, and it is this: a named videotape for each member of the family.

There only seems to be one operating difficulty with this

system. Why is it that my tape is filled with inviolable recordings of *Top of the Pops*, *Tellytubbies* and *Home Front*?

Pondering on the iniquity of this arrangement one evening, I sought solace in a number of videos which were incontrovertibly mine. Sporting videos, that is: "So Billy Bonds lifts that famous old trophy again," British Moore intones. "The prelude to a homecoming down the streets of London's East End, that for its fervour and its warmth would be almost impossible to match... It's one big happy Hammers family..."

The tone of West Ham United's official video history is swiftly established. "Relive the Hammers' greatest moments," the front cover urges. Three FA Cups, one European Cup-Winners' Cup – reasonable pickings in a 103-year his-

tory without being overwhelming. Put in this way – there is space and time to appreciate each victory fully.

The familiar images roll again: Trevor Brooking stooping to head the only goal of the 1980 FA Cup Final. Ha. Arsenal. Didn't win that one, did you? Alan Taylor securing the same trophy five years earlier with a pair of goals which left Fulham's keeper, Peter Mellor, looking like a man in need of intensive counselling.

And those vivid pictures of the 1984 Cup final celebrations, where wing-half Eddie Bovington bows his team-mates over the head with a supporters' replica of a giant claret-and-sky-blue hammer. Nowadays, of course, you wouldn't get such an item through the turnstile – and not because of its size.

These club videos can have hidden dangers for those participating. Moore maintains his usual off-screen presence – the kindly uncle, jollily the party along – and in that respect he is lucky, because there is no record of any fashion faux pas.

Alas, his interviewees are not so fortunate – and among them, none is less fortunate than Brooking, fresher of face and darker of mane than he appears on *Match of the Day* these days. His contribution, thoughts on the essential qualities of the club he served, are undermined by the impact of the jersey he has chosen. It's a kind of lurid green, white and black contour map. I can't think about it any more...

The overall effect of watching such videos is reassuring rather than inspiring. It is an act of confirmation, as much as affirmation. And I admit, one of the satisfactions for me is the fact that no one else in this family is in on it.

"This makes the local elections look interesting," commented my wife as the history looped back to the club's previous incarnation as Thames Iron Works. Her patience was strained still further by my next choice of viewing: *The World's Greatest Goals, Vol II* – sweet revenge for the simplicities of *Home Front*.

If you equate football with sex – for the purposes of argument – then these "greatest goal" compilations are all about the basic act, over and over and over again. There is precious little foreplay – it's pass, score, cross, score; pass, score. Wham, bam, thank you fans, and everyone piling in for the celebration.

But as I watched the balls being thrashed into the net from every conceivable angle – Norbert Nachtwald, Goal! Bixente Lizarazu, Goal! Yvan Leborgne, Goal! – musical backing that sounded like Lieutenant Pigeon – plinkety-plonk, kerplunk, plonk, plinkety-plonk, plonk – a dismal fact was borne in upon me that this was getting boring.

Cut a goal out of its context, and it is like taking a fish from its watery habitat. It may wiggle about a bit, but its power to move is severely diminished. I was experiencing Meaning Deficiency Syndrome and I knew that I had to act fast.

Thankfully, help was at hand: "The 1966 World Cup Final. England v West Germany. The full match!"

It is, of course, a wonderful match, an historic occasion. But

after I had scrutinised the play and noted once more the defensive hesitancy which caused Ray Wilson to offer Helmut Haller the opportunity of giving the Germans an early lead, my experience of the occasion was truncated. Starting awake to recover the almost empty lager can which had dropped from my hand, I noticed that there were people on the pitch who thought it was all over.

In that moment I recalled the previous time I had watched this match. It had ended, for me, shortly after Martin Peters had given England the lead. I made a mental note to concentrate much harder next time.

"These videos are for sad people," says my wife. She is clearly wrong. And, as soon as I can think of the reasons why, I will argue my case...

Indurain's team give Hunt his final polish

A British cyclist has shown his will to succeed by defeating some top Tour sprinters. Robin Nicholl talked to him

JEREMY HUNT is a self-made bike rider. With fine tuning from the team that guided Miguel Indurain to five Tour de France triumphs, he could be destined for great success.

Now there are hints that he could be ready for his first major event, the Tour of Spain, just three years after talent-spotter Francis Lafarge tipped off his fellow Banesto officials about a rare specimen – an Englishman with a spirit potent enough to win important races.

As the reign of Indurain closed with retirement, so Hunt arrived fresh and ambitious in the Spanish camp. A year later he was revealing the makings of another winner.

He dented the fast-finishing reputations of Erik Zabel and Italian Mario Cipollini in a Spanish stage race. Hunt out-sprinted the German in Zaragoza a month after Zabel had won the Milan to San Remo classic.

Cipollini, who rates himself the world's fastest finisher, was also in Hunt's wake, but two weeks before that victory Hunt had been having serious doubts.

"Then I won a stage in the French Tour de la Sarthe and it reassured me that I could make it as a professional," he said.

Hunt's confidence gathered momentum and he finished the year with 10 victories, nine of them in Union Cycliste Internationale races, which made him the seventh most prolific racer of the year.

Zabel has twice won the green jersey of top points-scorer in the Tour de France, and Cipollini took the points jersey in last year's Giro d'Italia. Those are major targets for top sprinters, and Hunt claimed

his apprentice colours with the points jersey in the aptly named Tour de l'Avenir (the Tour of the Future).

Six years before Lafarge "found" him, Hunt had proved he had the grit to make a bike rider. "In fact he spits gravel," said Colin Lewis, who was a team-mate of Tom Simpson in the 1967 Tour de France that cost Simpson his life.

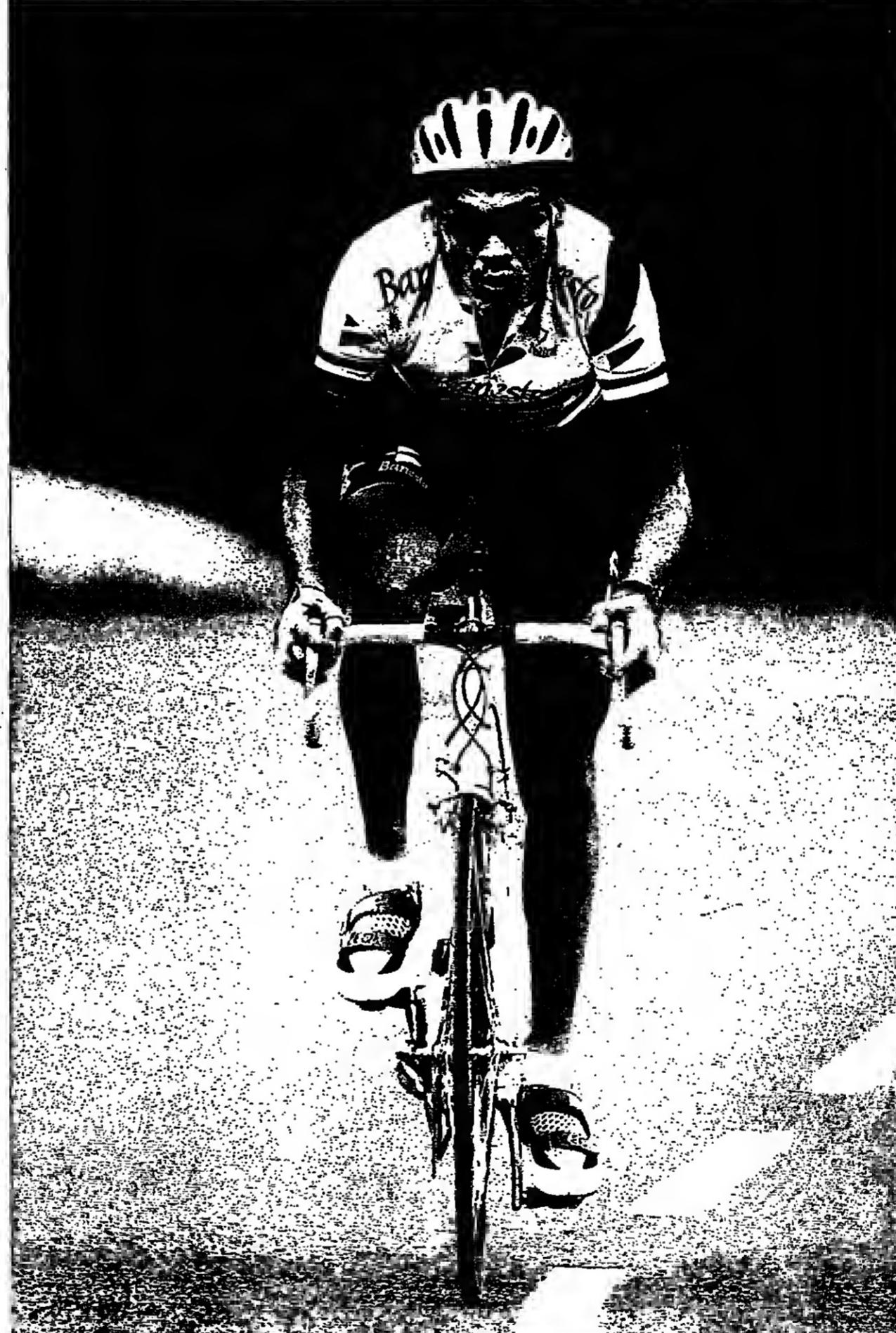
"Because he has had a tough family life, Jeremy is as hard as nails and you need that to be a top professional. He is a self-made 'tukie', and is that tough he will race on nothing. I once said that he would sleep in a bus shelter if it was necessary, and he gives nothing away."

"He thrives in mucky weather," said Lewis who first met Hunt when the callow 15-year-old walked into his Devon clubroom and said he wanted to be a bike racer like his dad. After Hunt won the British junior road race title in 1991, Lewis got him a place with a club in Metz, and then with another team based in Northern France.

"Out there it is the university of racing. Here it is just the high school," said Lewis whose protégé rapidly repaid the faith with 15 successes in his second year.

Hunt's hardness helped him to become British road race champion last year when he got up from a jarring crash to win. It has also become his undoing especially when faced with a 30-hour-a-week training regime.

"I got a bit carried away with training, and my body was not used to it. I cannot yet cope with really hard training," said Hunt who was born in Saskatchewan, Canada, 24 years ago.



Jeremy Hunt shows the style which encouraged Banesto to invest in his potential

"I got ill too, and as soon as my health goes down, everything goes out of the window. I had come through the apprentice stage with Banesto. Now I have to start all over again. I trained too hard after

I was ill and it would not go away."

The lung infection has set him back in a year when, with the right form, he could be tackling his first three-week tour in September. "I might be riding

the Tour of Spain. It is a possibility if I am showing well in August."

His dreams lie with the one-day classics. "I would like to be a classics rider like I was as an amateur because that is what I

Photograph: Phil O'Connor

am good at. My big ambition is to win a classic or a world road race championship."

Banesto's handlers have the skill and patience. Hunt has the qualities, and only time will tell if the mix is right.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

• I would say that team spirit was the real star of the season. Arsène

Wenger, explains why Arsenal won the Premiership.

• Two people have died

today – an alcoholic [the actor Kevin Lloyd] and an ex-footballer [Justin Fashanu]. When you put it into that kind of perspective it is only a football game. Tony Adams, Arsenal's one-time heavy drinking captain, waxes philosophical after securing the Premiership title.

• We recognise what champions are made of and after 10 straight wins you have to hold your hands up to Arsenal. They deserve our praise. Alex Ferguson, Manchester United's manager, shows graciousness after surrendering the Premiership crown.

• Failure over such a period is inexcusable and cannot be explained by bad luck or chance. David Bernstein, Manchester City's chairman, addresses to the City fans for two decades of failure that has left them in the Second Division next season.

• I've taken over as No 1 from possibly the greatest player of all time. John Higgins, the new world snooker champion on reaching the top of the world rankings.

• It was awful. I knew

there was something wrong.

Sergio Devyatkov,

the Ukrainian whose oppo-

nent, Spencer Oliver, under-

went brain surgery after their European title fight.

• They must have the will

to win, be desperate for

success. Alec Stewart,

England new cricket cap-

tain, on the qualities Eng-

land players must possess.

mer. But he'll be remembered with affection, partly for the rich, booming quality of a voice that at moments of high drama seemed to have a life of its own, breaking free and taking off like a homing pigeon.

The Sports Show exhumed his BBC radio commentary for Geoff Hurst's second goal in the 1966 World Cup final: "It's his bar!" roars Moore. "It must be in!" Wrong, as usual, but in his endearingly hammy way. "As biased as ever, as you can see," he remarked back in the studio.

This came during a debate on whether we should use a camera on the goal-line, and Moore was of the old school – "the referee is right even when he's wrong" – though a show of hands put him in a tiny minority.

There's a lot of wrong thinking in all this, incidentally. Eamonn Holmes used a recent example of a disallowed goal that was over the line; if it had been given, he said, Barnsley would be staying up and Everton going down. But how does he know that? If that goal had been given – i.e. if history had been different – then history would have gone on being different. Barnesley might have scored that goal then conceded two more themselves. Who's to say? I'm with Brian Moore: it all evens out, so let the referee get on with it. "At the end of it all, it's a game," he said.

And though that's hopelessly naive, it's a sentiment you want to concur with. So what if a pic's share prices go down with their team? Tough.

The great commentators aren't held in the esteem they are just because of what they say or the way they say it. As with great singers, the vocal textures themselves matter. Take the words "They think it's all over. It is now!" Imagine being said by Clive Tyldesley. I rest my case.

There was a classic example of unconscious racism during the Uefa Cup final from the otherwise benign Trevor Brooking, by the way. Matias Almeyda was sent off, not for the theatrics his name implies but for a nasty foul. "Not too clever," Brooking remarked. "It's the Argentinian coming out." Do the usual PC trick of substituting the word "black" for "Argentinian" and it takes on a different tone.

Brooking's remark might have been less surprising coming from one of the undeniably great commentators, Brian Moore, who has never knowingly been out-jingled. Moore's last game will be the World Cup final, after which he heads for the golf course, and he was on *The Sports Show* (ITV) to receive a few accolades.

We've all sometimes been as irritated as hell by Moore – the blind patriotism, the failure to see things in front of his nose – and given the choice of BBC or ITV have usually plumped for the former.

Major weekend fixtures

TODAY

Football
2.0 unless stated

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

PREMIER PLAY-OFFS

SEMI-FINAL FIRST LEG

SECOND DIVISION

FURTHER

BELL'S PREMIER LEAGUE

PREMIER DIVISION

Celtic v St Johnstone

Derby County v Rotherham

Hearts v Dundee

Kilmarnock v Hibernian

Motherwell v Aberdeen

PREMIER

Forest v Aldershot

Merton v Sterling

Partick Thistle v Dunfermline

Rangers v Motherwell

St Mirren v Dundee

SECOND DIVISION

Stenhousemuir v Clydebank

East Fife v Forfar

Liverpool v Chesterfield

Queens Park Rangers v Southend

THIRD DIVISION

Abbotsford v Montrose

Aberdeen v Dundee Park

Dundee v Cowdenbeath

Ross County v East Stirlingshire

FA CUP

LAST FOURTH

Carlisle v Bradford

Charlton v Wrexham

Colchester v Hartlepool

Exeter City v Notts County

Gateshead v Shrewsbury Town

Grimsby Town v Bury

Harrogate Town v Walsall

Hartlepool United v Oldham

Huddersfield Town v Accrington Stanley

Leeds United v Northampton Town

Lincoln City v Stevenage

Morecambe v Fleetwood Town

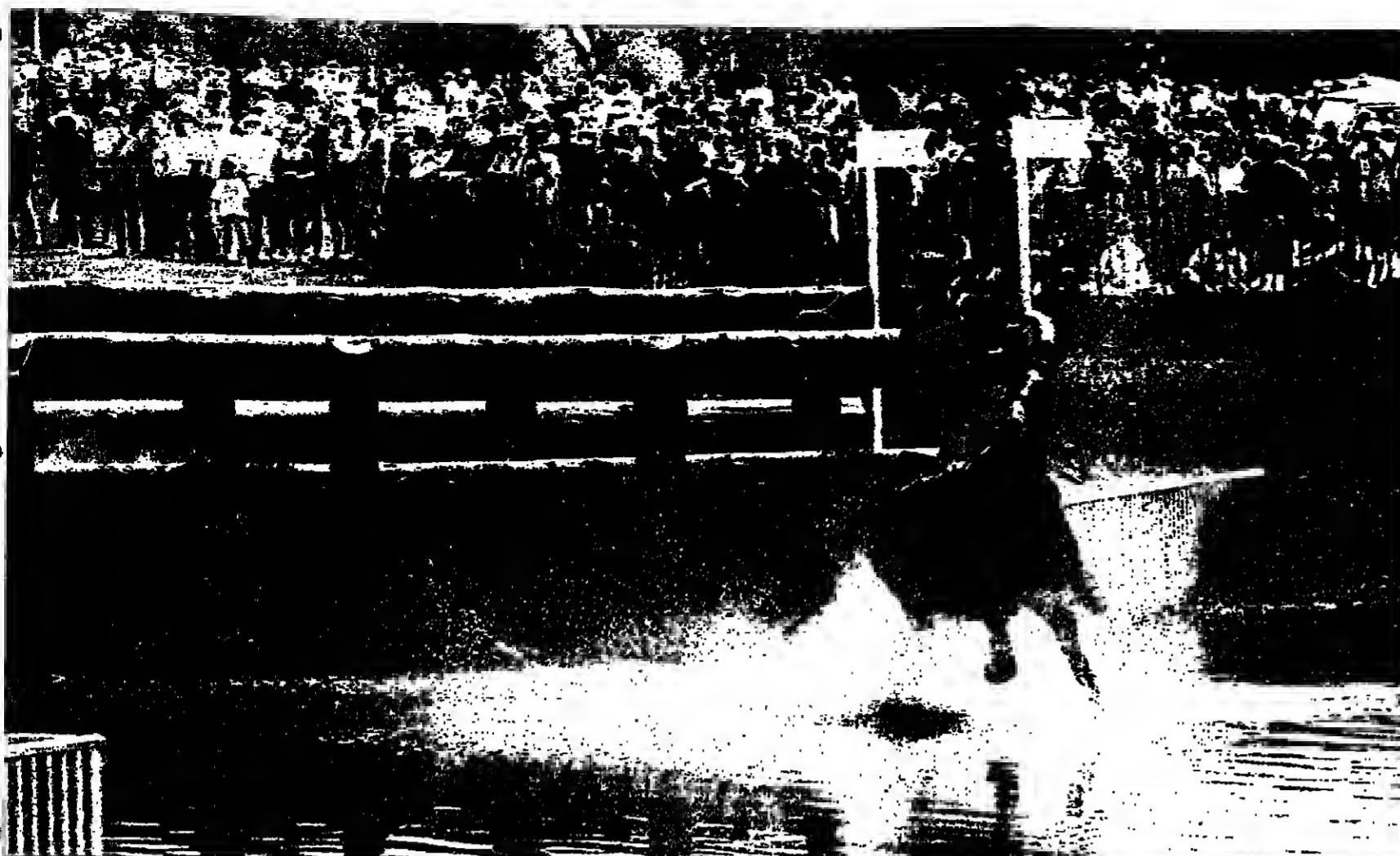
Newport County v Cheltenham

Oldham Athletic v Bury

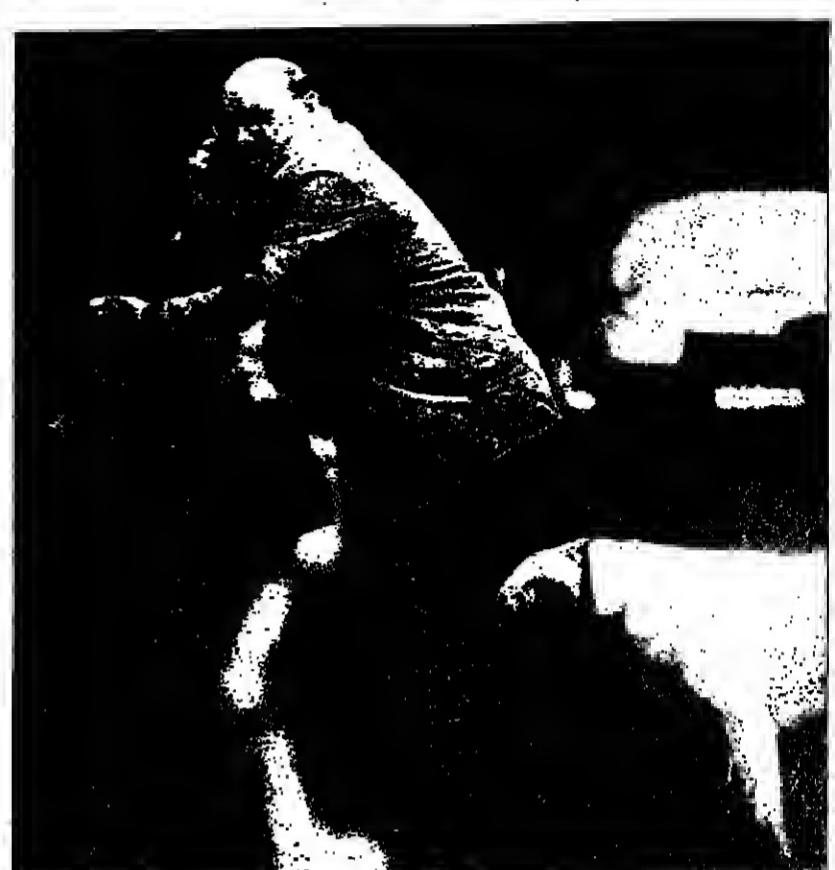
Shrewsbury Town v Walsall

Southend

15/PHOTOSHOOT

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 9 MAY 1998
■ 15

The cross-country course must maintain a difficult balance, being designed to test the competitors' nerve, endurance and speed without endangering them.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DAVID ASHDOWN AND PETER JAY

Hats off to heroic horses and rapid riders

By Genevieve Murphy

AFTER two sedate days of dressage, the Duke of Beaufort's estate is ready to receive the masses. Some 250,000 spectators will have turned up for the four days of the Badminton Horse Trials by the time that the £26,000 first prize is presented here tomorrow – and the vast majority will come for the hurly-burly of today's cross-country.

They come, primarily, to watch intrepid horses and riders jump dauntingly testing fences that most of us would never consider tackling in a month of Sundays. Hugh Thomas, director and

course designer, has no compunction about frightening the living daylights out of the riders, but he is ever anxious to avoid hurting the horses.

Badminton's inaugural contest, back in 1949, was prophetically called "The Most Important Horse Event in Great Britain." It was born as a result of the dismal British performance in the Olympic three-day event of 1948, when it was held at Aldershot.

Having watched the annihilation of the home riders, the last Duke of Beaufort decided to host an annual contest in which Britons could gain experience in the all-round test of dressage,

speed, endurance, cross-country and show jumping. Ten years later the present Duke (then David Somers) was runner-up on Countymen III. Badminton is now the greatest and the oldest three-day event in the world. It attracts all the leading international riders (the winners of the last four Olympic Games are competing here this weekend) and it boasts an enormous outdoor shopping centre.

The 288 trade stands, where you can buy everything from clothes to cookers, will have unloaded a huge quantity of goods over the four days. This morning will be particularly profitable, for regulars know that they have to ar-

rive early on cross-country morning in order to avoid the traffic jams. What better than to breakfast here at one of the food stalls before going on a shopping spree?

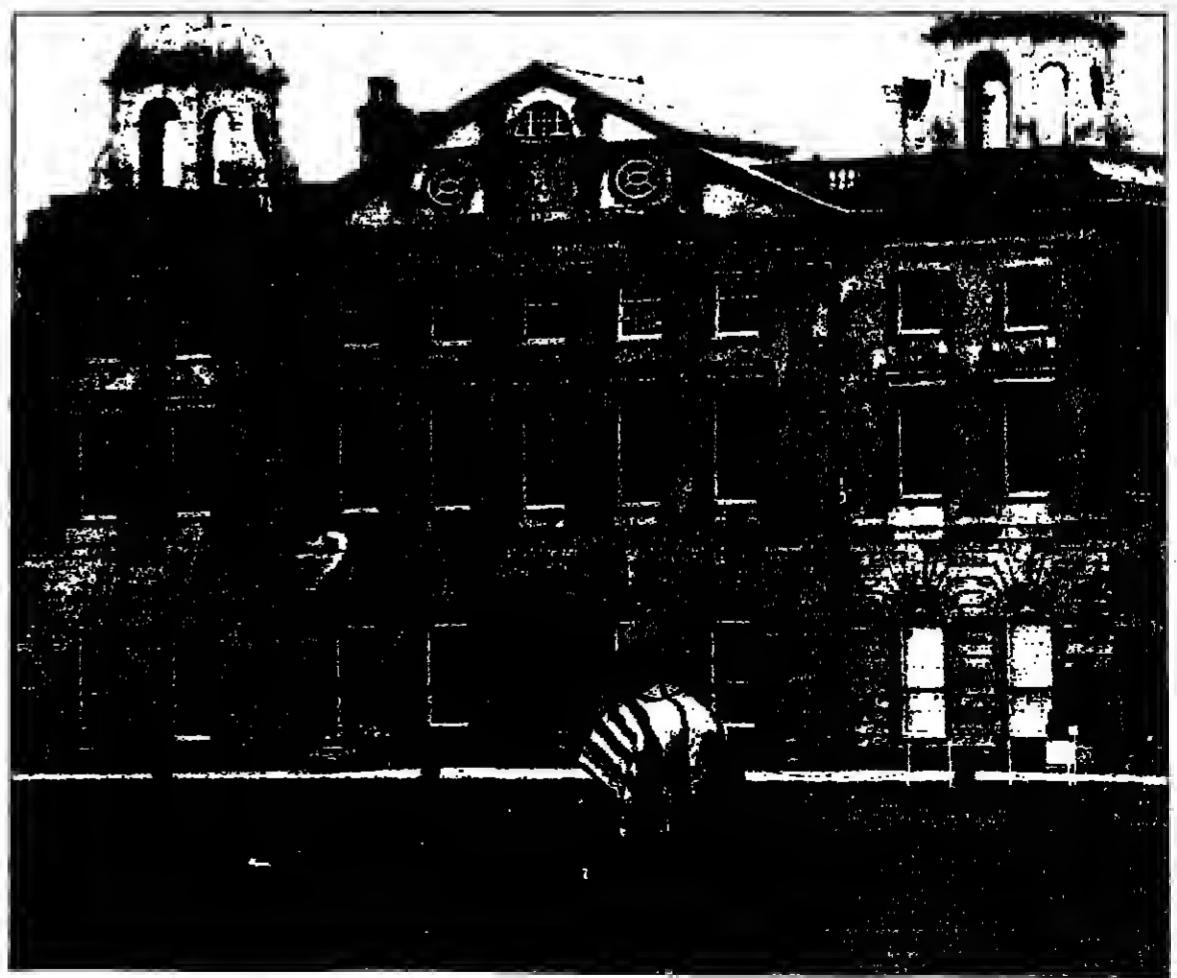
Thomas has no worries about this year's traders failing to book for 1999. He already has a long waiting list of those who are eager to fill any vacancy.

● Copies of these photographs – and any others by The Independent's sports photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam – can be ordered by telephoning The Independent on 0171-293-2534.

Yesterday at Badminton, page 19



Stable stables: Horses return after the day's competition



Formal attire: Horse and rider (above) relax in impressive surroundings after completing their dressage test, while (left) great care is taken to ensure hats and gloves are immaculate.

Balding nurtures Derby dream on Watership Down

For Ian Balding there will never be another Mill Reef but in the serenity of his historic stables he is preparing a horse that could bring a second Derby before retirement beckons. Greg Wood reports

THE rejuvenating properties of Watership Down are not, it seems, restricted to rabbits. Ian Balding will be 60 years old in November, and took out his first trainers' licence when the Beatles still had short hair, but you could never guess it from the bounce in his stride at evening stables. In fact, there is something almost childlike about the excitement and pleasure with which he greets his horses, with a pet-name and a Polo mint for each. But then, as he points out several times, Kingscere, his stable at the bottom of Watership Down, is "a very special place".

On the telephone, it might sound a little starry-eyed. When you are there, even on an overcast spring evening, Balding is simply stating the obvious. When John Porter, one of the finest trainers of any generation, built Park House Stables more than a century ago, he did so with the same care, patience and attention to detail that he later showed to the six Derby winners he prepared on its gallops. The red-brick buildings seem to glow with health and history. Such is the sense of heritage that, as Balding admits, its freedom almost comes with a responsibility to succeed.

"The beauty of Kingscere has been one of the driving forces of my life," he says. He arrived in 1964, as assistant trainer to Peter Hastings-Bass, whose daughter, Emma, was to become Mrs Balding five years later. Barely three months into his apprenticeship at Kingscere, Hastings-Bass died suddenly, and at just 25 years old, Balding took over as the master of Park House.

"I felt at the time that I was too young, and I was a jockey at heart. I hadn't ridden in the Grand National and there were all sorts of things I wanted to do, but in those days the Jockey Club wouldn't let you train as a professional and ride as an amateur. Luckily I inherited a lot of good owners and horses and



Ian Balding: 'Watership Down is a very special place. The beauty of Kingscere has been one of the driving forces of my life'

Photograph: Robert Hallam

the following year, which was my first full season, I think I was the leading English trainer, behind [Ireland's] Paddy Prendergast, who won the title."

Five years later, a juvenile colt arrived at Kingscere who would take Balding that vital step further. He worked like a champion but at first seemed sure to be only a sprinter. Instead, he was a phenomenon called Mill Reef, and the further he went, the faster he went. He won the Derby, Arc, Eclipse and King George, and would probably have won any 2,000 Guineas since the war except the one he contested, which included another great champion, Brigadier Gerard. John Porter would certainly have approved.

The 2,000 Guineas, as it happens, has eluded Balding

ever since, but what with the subsequent efforts of Lochsong at sprint distances and Selkirk over a mile, it is one of the few major events that has.

And now there may be a redbrick box at Park House with another Derby winner inside. Border Arrow, a son of Selkirk whose liver-chestnut complexion is a perfect match for his surroundings, finished third behind King Of Kings in the 2,000 Guineas last Saturday, and is Balding's most serious contender for the ultimate Classic

since Mill Reef himself was working up on Watership Down.

"Mill Reef was a horse in a lifetime, probably the best to have raced in this country since the war," he says. "They don't come along very often, even to the Vincent O'Briens, but you'd like to think that if you train

decent horses for good owners for this length of time, you might have two in that span that would win the Derby. When you've done it once, you live to try and do it again."

Not that even his trainer suspected that Border Arrow might bring another Classic back to Kingscere, until his first race, a maiden at Newmarket last October, which the colt won soundly in a useful time. His starting price of 33-1 was a measure of the surprise at the yard.

"We had no idea that he was any good at all until the last furlong of his first race," Balding says. "He's looks very like Selkirk, and he's not unlike him in temperament, the main thing being that he's incredibly lazy at home. When Selkirk won first time as a two-year-old I hadn't given him a single good entry,

so obviously I hadn't thought he was any good either."

Third place in the Guineas might make Border Arrow the form horse at Epsom anyway, but punters may get another look at him in the Dante Stakes at York on Wednesday. "It's a difficult decision," Balding says, "because in the last 20 years I think only The Minstrel has run in the Guineas, run again and then won the Derby. But I suspect that if we want the optimum chance in the Derby, he'll

need to be a bit more experienced and battle-hardened. He's had just three runs, all down the straight mile at Newmarket, and the Dante will give us three and a half weeks to give him a bit of a let-off and freshen him up."

There are questions about Border Arrow, such as his stamina and his ability to act on fast ground, which will be answered only on Derby Day itself, yet there is a distinct air of optimism radiating from his box in the corner of the yard where all the best horses live. Balding sees him every day, but the pleasure clearly does not diminish. "What a wonderful colour," he murmurs, lost in contemplation as Border Arrow stands to attention for his evening inspection. "What a lovely horse."

He is Balding's best chance of saddling another Derby winner, and also probably his last. Andrew, his son, has spent the last two years with Lynda and Jack Ramsden, and will soon return as his father's assistant. He is "mad keen" to take over the yard which his father has managed to buy outright over the

course of the last 30 years, and will do so "sooner rather than later", probably at the start of the new millennium.

"It's a wonderful life and I love it," Balding says, "but it's also very demanding. It's akin to being a football manager, a very mercurial existence when the relatively few high points happily outweigh the many low points. I shall be happy to play a bit more golf and tennis."

The lowest point of all came in 1972, when Mill Reef broke his leg on the gallops.

"The vet knelt down and felt it and said, 'It feels like a bag of marbles', and my heart just sank. But one of the Park House outbuildings, which in Porter's day was a Catholic chapel, made an ideal makeshift operating theatre, and a few days later, surgeons

saved Mill Reef for what turned

out to be one of the great stud careers.

The old chapel is now the "colours room", where tack and silks hang on the wall as if in a museum, along with trophies, winners' blankets and photographs of triumphs past. It is another source of pride for Balding, and you would not bet against him adding to the collection even when his son's name is on the licence.

For he is at least half-serious when he says that an ambition for his retirement is to "lose some weight and ride in a few point-to-points. My family and friends might be a bit disturbed, but I feel young enough and fit enough to want to do it". Given the obvious benefits of a life at Kingscere, you would not want to bet against it - or, for that matter, Border Arrow.

Cumani's High-Rise in the ascendancy

By Greg Wood

THERE is no doubt a good reason why the Dante Stakes, over the flat, galloping track at York next week, is apparently reckoned a better preparation for Epsom in June than the Derby Trial at Lingfield this afternoon, but at first sight, it is far from obvious. Lingfield, after all, is an undulating downland track with a steep descent into a sharp, left-handed home turn, and thus as close as you will get (with the possible exception of Brighton) to the unique challenge of Epsom.

And yet many leading trainers seem to automatically favour the Dante for their principal Derby hopes, and the winner of next Wednesday's

race will almost certainly emerge from what is a very confused ante-post market to be the clear favourite come the big day itself. Do not be lured into dismissing today's race as a contest for second-stringers, however, for while no horse has won both the Trial and the Classic during the 1990s, three did so in the previous decade, while two recent winners, Bob's Return and Silver Patriarch, have gone on to win the St Leger.

Silver Patriarch, in fact, was just a flared nostril away from beating Benny The Dip at Epsom almost 12 months ago, so the long odds available for the Derby against three of today's runners, Alboostan (33-1), High-Rise (33-1) and Sadian (40-1) could well appear very thin on the St Leger.

On bare form to date, Alboostan's second to Border Arrow in the Fielden Stakes gives

generous with the benefit of hindsight.

Not that hindsight is much use to punters, who could do a lot worse than take a small ante-

RICHARD EDMONDSON

NAP: Just Dissident (Bevery 4.20)

NB: Bristol Channel (Lingfield 3.40)

post interest on all three in the expectation that they will be sitting on at least one high-value bet by the end of the afternoon. For those who prefer to be more selective, however, it may be that HIGH-RISE (Nap 4.10) is the one to back.

The Oaks Trial has pointed a Classic winner rather more recently, and it was the way in which User Friendly swept around the turn a few years ago which convinced many punters that she was the

him the most obvious chance, while Sadian's blue-blooded pedigree (by Shirey Heights out of the French Oaks winner, Rafha, Rafha) will offer encouragement to some. While High-Rise has won only a limited stakes at Pontefract this season, however, he did so in the manner of a very useful colt, and it is also worth remembering that Luca Cumani, his trainer, used to be a jockey at the yard.

The sprint handicap is something of a puzzle, with the stalls arranged on the stands' side but the form horses all drawn low. In the expectation that they will head for the far fall, though, Lord Lieutenant (next best 3.10) looks a fair bet to reverse recent Newmarket form with Epsom Cyclone.

There are no fewer than three Group One events on the card at Longchamp tomorrow, all of which will feature on Sunday Grandstand. British yards will send out seven of the 13 runners for the Poule d'Essai des Poulains (French 2,000 Guineas), but it will take an exceptional performance to beat Critquette Head's With The Flow, who has won all three of his starts to date.

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There are no fewer than

Longchamp - Sunday

1.45 PRIX DE SAINT-GEORGE (Group Three) 5f Penalty Value £2,222

1 142 PAS DE REPOSE (IRE) (M. Almekhail) M Head 8 0 ... D Deleuze 6 C Azemard 2

2 602-1 PIPER (7) (M. Almekhail) J Pease 4 0 ... G Moore 11 107

3 60-5 SPLENNAR (FR) (2) (C) P. Aga Khan A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... G Moore 11 107

4 03-2 JENNIFER (10) (M. & J. Corradi) C Dwyer 4 84 ... L. Dettori 3

5 04-1 VENDETTA (20) (C) Cyril Humphreys F Langford 6 8 10 ... D Preller 4

6 104-1 SANTIE MARINE (IRE) (M. & J. Corradi) C Dwyer 6 8 10 ... G Moore 11 107

7 1-1 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

8 2-2 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

9 3-3 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

10 4-4 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

11 5-5 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

12 6-6 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

13 7-7 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

14 8-8 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

15 9-9 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

16 10-10 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

17 11-11 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

18 12-12 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

19 22-22 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

20 23-23 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

21 24-24 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

22 25-25 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

23 26-26 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

24 27-27 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

25 28-28 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

26 29-29 DESERT ROSE (IRE) (1) (D. Miller) A De Roche-Dupe 0 0 ... D Deleuze 6 107

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Les Wary
Nigan's
backlash

Tetley's Bitter Cup final: Springbok inspiration could make the difference for Saracens. Chris Hewett reports Capital rivals prepare for passion play

FRANÇOIS PIENAAR wins cup finals in the precisely the same way that Louis Luyt makes enemies: efficiently, single-mindedly and with astonishing frequency. He played no fewer than 19 of them back home in South Africa, all as captain, and lost only one. As the late Kitch Christie said to his protégé before the 1995 World Cup final in Johannesburg: "Hey François, when we get this far, we don't lose, eh?" And in, the Springboks did not lose.

Pienaar will not captain Saracens in this afternoon's Tetley's Bitter Cup final at Twickenham; that honour goes to Tony Diproso, a concert pianist of a No 8 whose soft hands and cherubic features tend to conceal the fact that he too is a natural leader, his inspirational qualities fired in the flames of recent adversity. But the most celebrated Springbok of modern times will be

alongside him where it matters and as long as his dodgy hamstring permits him to remain there, Sarries will feel their name is on the trophy.

The competitive juices have been flowing at flood level all week, for Pienaar does not subscribe to the theory that sporting journeys are more satisfying than sporting arrivals. When a silver pot is gleaming away on the mountain top, the big flanker from the high veld likes to get there without delay. "It's been a fruitful year for us but it can still come to nothing," he said this week. "It is Saracens' first cup final; for all our achievements, most of the guys do not know what it takes to be a champion. It is time they found out."

Lawrence Dallaglio has been making similar noises on behalf of a Wasps team who discovered the art of winning last season but then suffered a lengthy bout of amnesia:

"None remembers the runners-up," he snarled. "When we last made the final in 1995, we regarded getting to Twickenham as an achievement in itself. Somehow, it was enough. It's not enough now."

"We've changed our perspective, raised our sights. Sarries have shown great character in taking the Premiership contest down to the wire without being able to put their best players on the field, but we also pride ourselves on our ability to look inside ourselves and produce something extra."

If the imminent collision of two supreme competitive spirits makes today's showpiece the most fascinating in years, it is vital that the game should realise its obvious promise; not just because English rugby is in need of a decent cup final - last year's Leicester-Sale affair was dismal beyond belief - but because the game in London

urgently requires a public relations pick-me-up. Passions are running at a record high across the traditional union heartlands but Saracens apart, the capital clubs have struggled to quicken the imagination and raise the pockets of the vast potential audience on their doorstep.

Disturbingly, Wasps had shifted only half of their 15,000 ticket allocation by Tuesday afternoon and although Twickenham officials remain confident of a sell-out, there is no doubt that Londoners have been slower than their provincial brethren in taking the professional game to heart. "This final is good for Twickenham," Dallaglio asserted. "It's our job to make it something to remember."

Whatever happens, rugby will remember the contributions of Michael Lynagh, the most prolific scorer in Test history, and Philippe Sella, the most

capped international of them all. Barring injury, both will play in Saracens' final Premiership match on Thursday. Sella, indeed, aims to return to Twickenham in a fortnight to appear for one side or the other in the Sano Cup. To all intents and purposes, however, this is the grand farewell. It will be emotional in the extreme, their presence capturing the sympathy vote from the 50,000 neutrals in the stands.

Wasps have made in virtue of fronting up against the odds and they are probably the fresher, quicker outfit, regardless of their inexplicable decision to leave Paul Sampson on the bench. But Saracens possess the best front five in England and a half-back pairing of consummate class. If their walking wounded make it all the way to the final whistle, one half of the double will surely be done and dusted.

SARACENS v WASPS

at Twickenham

| | | |
|------------------|----|--------------------|
| G Johnson | 15 | G Rees |
| R Constable | 14 | S Roiser |
| P Sella | 13 | M Denney |
| S Ravenscroft | 12 | R Henderson |
| B Daniel | 11 | L Scrase |
| M Lynagh | 10 | A King |
| K Bracken | 9 | M Friday |
| R Grau | 1 | D Molloy |
| G Chuter | 2 | S Mitchell |
| P Wallace | 3 | W Green |
| P Johns | 4 | M Weedon |
| D Grawcock | 5 | S Shaw |
| B Sturham | 6 | J Worsley |
| F Pienaar | 7 | P Volley |
| A Diproso, capt. | 8 | L Dallaglio, capt. |

Replacements: 16 M Singer; 17 R Wallace; 18 A Lee; 19 M Olsen; 20 A Bennett; 21 A Oliver; 22 G Borberman.

Replacements: 16 P Sampson; 17 A Gomarsall; 18 M White; 19 A Reed; 20 T Dunston; 21 A Black; 22 T Leota.

Referee: C White (Cheltenham) Kick-off: 3pm (Sky Sports 2)

Kucera leaves mark on Muster

Tennis

KAROL KUCERA, the sixth seed, overcame a tentative opening before finding his rhythm against Thomas Muster to breeze into the semi-finals of the German Open in Hamburg yesterday.

Kucera won 6-2, 6-3 after coming back from a break down in the first set, before embarking on a run that saw him take the next nine games and jump into a 4-0 lead in the second set. The 24-year-old Slovak, who is ranked No. 10 in the world, rediscovered his ground strokes, peppering the lines with powerful shots and then frustrating Muster by changing his options with clever drop shots.

Kucera's semi-final opponent will be the Spanish clay court specialist Albert Costa, who beat Fabrice Santoro of France 6-3, 6-4. For Costa, the world No 26, it will be his first semi-final of the year.

Muster, who was briefly ranked world No 1 in 1996, leads the tour with 40 tournament titles on clay, but he has not won on the surface in 18 months and the Austrian has slipped to No 25.

The turning point came in the sixth game, when the two players exchanged a spectacular series of diagonal drop shots. The rally ended with Muster hitting the net, Kucera went on to break Muster's serve and the Austrian never got back into the match.

"Once he takes over, he can put a lot of pressure on you and wrong-foot you," Muster said. "He played a lot of topspin and kept me far behind the baseline."

The German Open represents one of the major form guides for the French Open, the second Grand Slam event of the year which starts on 25 May. "I wouldn't say I am one of the favourites," Kucera said, "but if I am fit enough and I keep playing this well, sure I could win the French Open."

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Black's dressage delight

Equestrianism

By Genevieve Murphy
at Badminton

STUART BLACK, the sole Canadian competing at the Badminton Horse Trials, rode Market Venture to one of the best dressage tests ever seen in three-day eventing when he took the lead here yesterday.

The 12-year-old horse (bred in England, as was his rider who comes from Macclesfield) produced a wonderfully soft and fluent test, which included two perfect flying changes.

Black now leads from two riders sharing second place: New Zealand's Mark Todd on Broadcast News, with whom he won last year's European Open title, and Owen Moore, at present the best of the home riders on his newly acquired mount, Lightfoot. Chris Bartle, who trains the British event team for dressage (and has recently helped Moore in that capacity) is fourth on Word Perfect II.

Black, who moved to Canada in 1977 at the age of 17, has had recent disappointments. Last year, when he was due to compete here for the first time, Market Venture was found to have an abscess the day before the horse inspection and had to be withdrawn.

This year, Black and his mount arrived in England two and a half weeks before Badminton "in case anything went wrong again". The horse took the plane journey and everything else in his stride, so much so that the charged atmosphere is a positive help in the dressage arena. "It picks him up and brings out a bit of flair," Black said.

The standard of dressage was higher than on Thursday and overnight leader, Daisy Dick, had slipped to 12th by the time this phase was completed.

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Johnson's talent will be difficult to replace at Saracens

Photograph: Allsport

Big game occupying Johnson's thoughts

Saracens' South African full-back may make a decision to retire after the club's attempt on the double. Chris Hewett talked to him

IF Gavin Johnson was once a model of uncertainty, he is no longer quite so sure of himself. Saracens' imposing South African full-back agonised long and hard before throwing in his lot with the north Londoners and spent much of this season doubting whether his rebellious body would allow him to play more than a walk-on part in his club's courageous challenge for a first professional league and cup double. Now that he is playing, he is in two minds as to whether he should continue doing so. Truly, his indecision is final.

Under the circumstances, it is a minor miracle that he should have pulled off the most decisive tackle of the season to date; an inspirational dash of defensive brilliance that may yet win Saracens the Allied Dunbar Premiership. "Yes, that was an important tackle," he says, recalling the last minute - nay, last second - corner-flagging hit that denied Jamie Williams, his Harlequins opposite number, what would have been a match-winning and Premiership-deciding try at The Stoop 10 days ago. "I'm quite proud of that one."

It is perfectly conceivable, likely even, that Johnson has only two games of big-time rugby left to him. A lifelong fisherman and passionate wildlife enthusiast, he has a 40-kilometre stretch of virgin Zambian game reserve waiting for him the moment he retires and he is currently weighing the obvious attractions of a Hemingwayesque life in the Upper Zambezi against the prospect of another season of tough Premiership activity in lower Watford. Well, what would you do?

Less than a month ago, Johnson's mind was uncharac-

teristically close to being made up; after Saracens' outstanding semi-final victory at Northampton, the Canadian Wasp who opposes him today, in what became known as the Battle of Boet Erasmus. Neither went the distance; Johnson withdrew with concussion while Rees was sent off for trying to concuss everyone else.

It was Pienaar, now Saracens' player-coach, who first planted the seeds of an English sojourn in Johnson's mind. "He was looking for a full-back and thought of me. I gave him an adamant 'no way' at first but he talked me round. I signed a three-year contract with the South African union, but Louis Luyt obliged by releasing me early and the next thing I knew, I was here in London.

"I'd been in the British Isles before - I played for Blackrock College in Ireland for six months - but I don't suppose for a moment that I'd have come back had it not been François' idea. His leadership of the Springboks was quite outstanding and if anything, his abilities are even greater now. He always makes you feel that victory is possible, that you can achieve the ultimate on a rugby field, and his impact here at Saracens has been something else."

Frustratingly, any early impact Johnson might have made was blunted by injury. Saracens knew he was a high-quality marksman and an extraordinarily accomplished kicker out of hand - the best in the Premiership, perhaps - but try as they might, they could not get him on to the pitch. Even now, he has played only 11 Premiership games for the title challengers and two of those were at the frag end of last season.

"There were two separate

problems with my hamstring and my left knee went as well," he said. "I couldn't seem to get myself fit and I ended up feeling pretty negative about things. I came to the conclusion that I'd had enough of rugby and should start thinking about my future outside the game. But the club were very supportive and full of encouragement and in recent weeks, my body has started to behave and I've loved every minute of it."

"Whatever I decide to do - and I'll be speaking to the club next week - I feel very privileged to be playing in an English cup final. I've been fortunate enough to have experienced my fair share of special occasions; Currie Cup finals in South Africa generate fantastic interest and even though I played only seven Tests, one was against New Zealand and another against Western Samoa in a very emotional World Cup quarter-final. Twickenham has a tradition of its own, though, and I'm honoured to be involved in this match."

Saracens freely admit that Johnson will be difficult to replace, especially now that they have abandoned any thought of shelling out mega-bucks for Tim Stimpson, the disaffected Test Lion from Newcastle. "It's up to Gavin, but he knows how highly we rate him," said Mark Evans, the director of rugby, this week. "You've seen something approaching the best of him in recent weeks and when he plays at that level, he's the Real McCoy."

Evans can rest assured that for today, at least, his prize full-back is more concerned with the big game at Twickenham than the big game back home. After that, who knows? Certainly not Johnson.

By Chris Hewett

AT LONG last, a vote for common sense. England's warring factions kissed and made up yesterday after two long years of bloody civil conflict and although a handful of hard-line extremists will undoubtedly head for the mountains to plot their revenge, the domestic game can finally start celebrating peace in its time.

Both the Rugby Football Union council and its management board gave overwhelming support to a wide-ranging seven-year agreement hammered out by the rival negotiating teams led by Graham Smith, the RFU member for Kent, and Tom Wilkinson, the Formula One team owner who has a majority share in Gloucester.

"The deal underpins the efforts of the England team while

recognising the club-based nature of rugby in this country," said Smith. "We went in with a positive attitude and while it's fair to say that we've had our moments of discord, we've come out with a positive agreement."

As expected, England's Premiership clubs will boycott next year's Heineken Cup. The Allied Dunbar top flight will accommodate 14 teams next season and professional players will operate under standard contracts featuring built-in release dates for international rugby - a move certain to infuriate Cliff Brittle, the marginalised RFU chairman, and his major ally, Fran Cotton, who has already set the wheels in motion for a special general meeting in the summer.

Cotton will be positively apoplectic at the RFU's decision to turn its back on provincial

rugby, the resurrection of which he has turned into a crusade. He will almost certainly claim that the clubs have won to the detriment of rugby worldwide.

However, the clubs have made significant concessions on key issues. Full England players - that is to say, those involved in Test squads - will play no more than 37 games a season and to that end, Premiership rugby will be played on or around international weekends. Never before have the clubs accepted the principle of playing important games without their leading lights.

"We've also ensured that there will be no Premiership closed shop; there will always be promotion and relegation," said Smith, whose quiet and restrained approach made him a key figure in the wheeling and dealing. Next season, Bedford

Metcalfe takes centre stage

By Bryn Palmer

THE Glasgow Hawks full-back Glenn Metcalfe will take centre stage at Murrayfield today as the Second Division champions aim to cap a remarkable first season with a Tennents Vets Cup triumph over Kelso.

But it surely will not be the last time the New Zealanders enjoy top billing at the national stadium as a first Scotland cap beckons ever closer with each new try. The 26-year-old former Waikato provincial player could achieve that goal when he returns to the southern hemisphere as part of the tour party heading for Fiji and Australia later this month.

Before that, however, lies the challenge of helping the Hawks soar to even greater heights. Runaway winners of their own division with weeks to spare and having already comfortably dis-

Clubs agree deal with RFU

By Chris Hewett

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Redknapp ready to serve club and country

Football

By Paul Walker

JAMIE REDKNAPP will sign a new five-year contract with Liverpool next week – and tell Glenn Hoddle that he is fit for England World Cup duty.

The Liverpool manager, Roy Evans, will also sit down next week for contract talks with Steve McManaman in an attempt to end the saga over whether the winger will stay or leave when his current deal runs out at the end of next season.

Redknapp is a week away from full fitness after struggling with a knee injury since the draw at Coventry last month, and will be absent again at Derby on Sunday in Liverpool's final

game of the season. He said: "My contract is all sorted out and I expect to sign it on Monday. As far as playing again is concerned, I'm not quite ready yet and would probably be OK if we had a game next Saturday. But as far as England is concerned, I will be fully fit for the World Cup."

As for McManaman, he can leave on a free transfer next summer under the Bosman ruling.

Liverpool want to know his thinking – whether he stays or goes – as soon as possible.

Liverpool are one of several clubs to be linked with Tottenham's England defender Sol Campbell – Spurs are determined to hang on to him and their other young players. In a press statement yesterday the

White Hart Lane club said: "Despite the release of several players under the Bosman ruling – Jürgen Klinsmann, Gary Mabbutt, David Howells, Dean Austin and Danny Hill – David Pleat [the club's director of football] has insisted that, whatever attention younger talent like Sol Campbell, Steffen Iversen and Espen Baardsen may attract, they are not for sale.

"Only players who are not part of the future planning of the club will be considered for transfer trading. These could include José Dominguez and Justin Edinburgh. Frode Grodias is also likely to be allowed to leave and is currently the subject of a transfer inquiry."

Manchester City are optimistic that they may soon complete Georg Kinkladze's transfer to Ajax – even though a fee for the Georgian has still not been agreed.

Bradford City have confirmed Paul Jewell as their manager, with a two-year contract. He has spent 10 years at Valley Parade as player, coach and then caretaker manager since Chris Kamara's departure during the season. His assistant will be Chris Hutchings, whose position has also been changed from temporary to permanent.

Fifa has declared its executive committee is ready to discuss banning Wimbledon's possible move to Ireland. Football's world governing body announced in Zurich yesterday that it is set to consider the matter along with several other points at its 8 June congress in Paris – two days before the World Cup finals begin.

Chelsea's managing director, Colin Hutchinson, said: "The evidence of everything we've heard from them is that we would be required to defend the Cup, because Uefa ranks it second only to the Champions' League in importance."

The suggestion that Gianluca Vialli's side could take part in the Cup-Winners' Cup even if they lift the trophy on Wednesday – despite hints that they could opt out. That means Blackburn, Leicester, West Ham, Aston Villa or Derby could sneak into Europe after all – even if they finish outside the Premiership top six.

The suggestion that Gianluca Vialli's side could take part in the Cup-Winners' Cup even if they beat VfB Stuttgart in next week's Stockholm final came after senior officials of Uefa, European football's governing body, faced the German club. Like Chelsea, who are Coca-Cola Cup winners and likely to finish fourth in the Premiership, Stuttgart – poised to earn a top-six Bundesliga spot – will also earn a place in the Uefa Cup.

The correspondence from Uefa suggested that Stuttgart would be given the option of choosing which competition to play in, an offer which would

also be made to Chelsea if they triumphed in the Rasunda Stadium. With the Uefa Cup containing an extra money-spinning round, Stuttgart's president, Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, had been reported to be asking Bundesliga rivals to chip in money to compensate his club for playing in the Cup-Winners' Cup instead.

Confusio reigned at Uefa's Swiss headquarters yesterday, with different officials sending divergent signals over what the regulations stated. If Chelsea do win, and defend the trophy, it would open up an extra Uefa Cup slot for the club finishing seventh in the Premiership.

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Rangers left to hope Old Firm rivals blow last chance

By Phil Gordon

JONATHAN GOULD has kept a low profile all season, so the Celtic goalkeeper has to be listened to when he claims Rangers are dabbling in a flight of fancy.

The Scottish champions have tried to turn up the psychological pressure on the other half of the Old Firm by ensuring a helicopter is kept on stand-by today to whisk them back to Glasgow if they beat Dundee United and Celtic lose, a combination of results which would prevent Rangers with a record 10th title in a row.

Ibrox is playing host to 32,000 fans watching events from Tannadice unfold on giant screens and one-upmanship has enticed them into their bold aerial gesture.

However, Gould, whose meagre total of just 24 goals conceded has played a crucial part in Celtic being in the brink of their first title since 1988, be-

lieves that a victory for the Premier Division leaders against St Johnstone at Parkhead will bring their eternal rivals crashing back to earth.

"You have to be very careful when you do things the way Rangers have this week," hissed Gould, leaving no doubt that it has supplied the motivation, if any more were needed. "Put it this way, I would be pretty disappointed if I didn't have a championship medal by Saturday night."

More than 52,000 fans will pack Parkhead to see if Wim Jansen's team can protect their two-point advantage over Rangers. The Dutch coach remains unfazed by all the hype, saying: "We know what we have to do. We don't have to rely on anyone else, only ourselves."

Rangers believed their championship ambitions were dead after they lost to Kilmarnock last week until Dunfermline offered them a reprieve 24 hours later.

Now they are desperate to take advantage.

Walter Smith has a string of injury problems for his final league match in charge of the club, including Jonas Thern and Andy Goram who have hamstring injuries. Smith said:

"Celtic have the destiny of the title in their hands. But this has been a strange season. All we can hope for is a result and await the outcome of Celtic's game."

Kilmarnock will clinch the last remaining Uefa cup place if they defeat Hibernian at home and finish in fourth place.

But St Johnstone, who are a point behind, have plenty of incentive to spoil the Parkhead

party and replace it with one of

their own. Hearts, already assured of a place in Europe, will rest some players ahead of next week's Scottish Cup final, for their home match with Dunfermline, while Motherwell will bring down the curtain at home to Aberdeen.

Kevin Langley, I said OK, as

sharp as it wasn't stepping on his toes. He didn't get back to me.

The next thing I knew Kew offered me the job a few weeks later. I said no at first and told him I wanted to get back into the League, but he kept on and they came up with a good package for me. I took it last summer, but on the one condition that if a League job came up I was free to leave."

After a career spanning over 15 years at the top Sharp suddenly found himself taking charge of a part-time club at a level he knew nothing about. He said: "I went into the job completely blind. I needed an assistant who knew the scene and they came up with a lad called John Holse, who was a boss in his own right and a big Evertonian so we hit off immediately."

"I found it hard at times dealing with part-time players who have jobs and you only see them for an hour or so for training a couple of days a week on an artificial pitch. Lads would miss out through their work and it was different to everything I had been used to, a day-to-day professional atmosphere."

"These are a good bunch of guys and keen to succeed. They only miss games if they really can't avoid it, but it causes

GRAEME SHARP'S away trips are at the likes of Anglesey out Amfield these days, but those roads may lead to Europe both for him and Bangor City.

Sharp has waited an unlucky

13 years for his chance to return to the European Cup-Winners' Cup since Everton's triumph in Rotterdam. Now he is manager of Bangor City, he has had unexpected opportunity presented by the Welsh Cup final against Connah's Quay tomorrow.

The Scottish striker who was once the key to Everton's team of the Eighties has taken the north-Wales side to the brink of Europe in his first year in charge. He hopes it will also be a passport back to the public eye for him.

Sharp took on the challenge following his departure as Oldham's manager. He was on the sidelines and on the Northrop

Manor golf course, where he lives. As he looked out on to those fairways he admitted: "It would have been the easiest thing in the world to walk away and spend my time out there every day. But I've been in the game since I was a kid and I didn't want to let go."

"It was through a neighbour, Kew Jones, that I got into Bangor City. He owns a few garages and is the club's main sponsor. He was always on to me to watch them and one day asked if I would like to help them for a result and await the outcome of Celtic's game."

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Graeme Sharp: On the verge of an unlikely success at the helm of Bangor City.

Photograph: Iolo Williams

Sharp eyes European return

If Bangor City beat Connah's Quay tomorrow, a former Everton striker will make it back to the Cup-Winners' Cup. Alan Nixon reports

anything like this and the fans could get a great trip out of it.

"Hopefully, someone will see that I have something to offer as a boss out of this. I think my record at Oldham is better than you would imagine. I kept them up in the first season and left them higher than Joe Royle had done when he went. We stayed up the year after and I think I would have done it again if I had got out.

After a career spanning over 15 years at the top Sharp suddenly found himself taking charge of a part-time club at a level he knew nothing about. He said: "I went into the job completely blind. I needed an assistant who knew the scene and they came up with a lad called John Holse, who was a boss in his own right and a big Evertonian so we hit off immediately."

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"These are a good bunch of guys and keen to succeed. They only miss games if they really can't avoid it, but it causes

problems all the same. One of our strikers pulled out at an hour's notice the other week and I even had to put the boots back on and sit on the bench."

Yet Sharp's culture shock was one that has kept his enthusiasm alive. He said: "I've been to parts of Wales I never knew existed. Haverfordwest feels like the other end of the world. It's our one overnight trip of the season. We can't afford any others. But everywhere you go the people are genuine football fans."

"There is a lot of feeling for the game among them even if the crowds are small. I'm pleased we've reached the Cup final to reward our fans. I hope we can bring them some glory and make the European Cup-Winners' Cup. It would be a dream to get a Scottish or English team in the first round, but I'd like to think we'll be going to the Ukraine."

Ironically Sharp has been exiled from Europe since Everton won the final in 1985. Because of the English clubs' ban after Heskey, Everton could not compete at that level and then came their recent decline. Sharp said: "It would be good for me to go back to Europe, but it's better for the club. I've been there, the lads in the team have never known

the continent and I hope they will get a great trip out of it.

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problems all the same. One of our strikers pulled out at an hour's notice the other week and I even had to put the boots back on and sit on the bench."

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"There is a lot of feeling for the game among them even if the crowds are small. I'm pleased we've reached the Cup final to reward our fans. I hope we can bring them some glory and make the European Cup-Winners' Cup. It would be a dream to get a Scottish or English team in the first round, but I'd like to think we'll be going to the Ukraine."

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Quinn set to make play-off return

By Ian Rodgers

SUNDERLAND were left despondent by the events of last week – but midfielder Lee Clark is determined his side will not miss the play-off boat.

Quinn
set to
make
play-off
return

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21/FOOTBALL

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 9 MAY 19

The next step is a self-justifying autobiography



THE GAFFER TAPES

THERE are times when all the hard work, the planning and the meetings, pays off. Thus this week I used all my years of experience in the game and, a few well-placed interviews and an emotional outburst on Sky later, I had won the PR battle. The chairman still sacked me, that was inevitable, but the media described it as "harsch" and said I was "sure to be back" in work soon as football needs men like Barry Gaffer".

Even the fans, who had been singing my name for weeks, dropped the "Out" from their chants. As Sludgethorpe Brazil dropped into the First Division, I told them, "you'll be back, I'll be back, but it's a tragedy for us both that we won't be back together."

Actually I'll be pleased to get away from the place. None of the female office staff will let me within three yards of them while the town itself is the piñ. At least I won't have to spend my life on the M6 commuting from civilisation to Sludgethorpe anymore.

Still, right to the end we had some good times this season. That team-bonding trip to Alton Towers was one of the best; everyone got soaked, Shaun Paine cracked up over the chairman's best Armani in the roller-coaster and Ivor Niggle was taken to hospital with internal injuries after swallowing an entire candy floss, stick and all, for a bet.

The coach trip home was even more lively. Cliff Phace had a disagreement with Ivor Paine which ended up with Paine's clothes disappearing out of the window while Broccoli Moore got so tanked up he passed out under the back seat. We didn't realise until the coach company rang up the following morning to tell us he was still there. It is just a shame we then lost 5-1 to confirm our relegation.

I've already made a start looking for a new job. My agent has negotiated a newspaper column and a spot of television punditry where I can sell my awareness of the game and crowd-pleasing one-liners. The next step is a self-justifying autobiography and a line of exclusive fashionable clothing - monogrammed shell-suits, that sort of thing. I might even do one of those roadshows where you tour provincial cinemas telling a few tales with some old mates. Hopefully I'll be able to pull some local crumpet on the dubious premise of being able to engineer a night out with David Beckham when Posh Spice is away on tour.

I've a few matters to clear up at the Old Cornfield, the main one being defending Broccoli on a misconduct charge. In our last game he put his tongue in an opponent's ear at a corner. Now this might be alright for an effete cricketer like Merv Hughes but in our manly game the FA take a dim view of such things. No matter that he'd been kicked all over the park by the bloke. Even so, he might have got away with it if he hadn't had beetroot for his pre-match meal. The defendant's purple ears, and Broccoli's tongue, gave the game away.

It's that sort of thing that I'll miss. Since taking over from Big Mick in the autumn (he's now coaching the Monrovia national team by the way), I've had a memorable time, no more so than when I was kidnapped in mid-season.

She's been offered a new job as personal Cognac girl for one of the leading commentators on the World Cup. You can catch us on the pay-per-view satellite channel, Ooh Lah Lah TV, for whom I'm covering the Marseilles games from an exclusive resort on the Côte D'Azur. They offered to put me up in a two-star does house in the Arab quarter but I generously said I'd sort out my own accommodation. It means I'll barely turn a profit on the deal but what the hell, I can afford it. Don't tell the ex-wives but that's the best thing about management, the massive pay-offs when you eventually get the sack.

Barry Gaffer was talking to Glenn Moore

Trouble at home for Romania

Romania

THE Romanian football federation (FRF) crossed swords with its coach, Andrei Iordănescu, yesterday by naming the top young player Denis Serban in the squad for the European Under-21 Championship.

Iordănescu has said he wanted Serban kept for Romania's World Cup squad - as any player taking part in the Under-21 event, which takes place in Romania from 23 to 31 May, would be too tired for France '98.

"At issue here is our country's prestige. Romania wants to win the Under-21 European finals," the FRF general secretary, Adalbert Kassay, said. The FRF has been engaged for months in skirmishes with Iordănescu, who will quit after the finals in France and take over coaching Greece.

Turkey

TURKISH police have detained two men in connection with an alleged attempt to fix a match at the weekend that helped determine the league champion.

The arrests came after Sekerspor's goalkeeper, Murat Akarsu, claimed two men had offered him a bribe of about £65,000 to concede a goal in last Sunday's match against second-placed Fenerbahce. Sekerspor's management told Akarsu to continue negotiations with the pair and alerted the police. Fenerbahce denied any link with the detained men.

Fenerbahce drew 1-1, which meant their Istanbul rivals, Galatasaray, clinched the title by beating Istanbulspor 4-1. They have a four-point lead with only one match remaining.

Yugoslavia

THE former European champions Red Star Belgrade have decided to stop an imminent mass exodus of their top talent. Their board has decided to stop further transfers after three top players, all Yugoslav internationals, signed for foreign clubs.

The cash-strapped club, whose recent derby with Partizan Belgrade drew a record low of 11,000 fans, began selling off

AROUND THE WORLD BY RUPERT METCALFE

players in March in an effort to cover mounting losses. The club profited handsomely from the sale of Dejan Stankovic, Zoran Jovicic and Bratislav Zivkovic, but others will have to wait until their contracts expire.

Egypt

HANY RAMZY, an Egyptian who plays for the German Bundesliga club Werder Bremen, could face charges for performing a Nazi salute during a party, his club said this week.

Doing the salute is outlawed in Germany and the public prosecutor's office is investigating the case. Ramzy has apologised, saying he was not aware of the significance of the gesture.

Mexico

POLITICIANS in Mexico said this week they may postpone a special session of congress until after the World Cup finals. "Unfortunately, we have to consider factors which are not entirely political, such as football," Francisco Paoli, a legislator for the National Action Party (PAN), said.

Mexico's lower house ended its regular session on 30 April, but legislators had planned to call a special session to pass a series of financial reforms by President Ernesto Zedillo and discuss ways to bring peace to the troubled Chiapas state.

With two Serie A games to play, Juventus have a four-point lead over second-placed Internazionale and will lift the title on 17 May.

First, however, Juventus have to overcome Baggio, now 31 but in excellent form with 20 league goals for Bologna this season. He will be highly motivated and not only because he would enjoy beating side which off-loaded him amid acrimony at the end of the title-winning 1995 season.

Baggio's main motivation, though, is that Sunday's game offers him probably his last chance to convince the national coach, Cesare Maldini, that he is worth a place in Italy's squad for next month's World Cup finals in France. Maldini is expected to be in Turin for a last look at Baggio's form.

Bologna have the incentive of trying to secure one of Italy's two places in the Intertoto Cup, reportedly because he refused to back down on salary de-



Keiko Tanaka, a Japanese model, sports the 'World Cup bra' which went on sale in Tokyo this week. Photograph: Reuters

Baggio has incentive to foil Juventus

ROBERTO BAGGIO stands between his old club and their 25th Italian league title when his Bologna side meet Juventus in Turin tomorrow.

With two Serie A games to play, Juventus have a four-point lead over second-placed Internazionale and will lift the title on 17 May.

If Juventus do not win tomorrow and Inter beat Bari, then the title contest will go down to the last day, 17 May.

Baggio is set to join Manchester United last year but eventually stayed with Bayern, reportedly because he refused to back down on salary de-

a back door into next season's Uefa Cup.

Juventus want to wrap up the title contest tomorrow and leave themselves 10 days for peaceful preparation for their European Cup final against Real Madrid in Amsterdam on 20 May.

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something Juventus would obviously like to avoid.

Bayern Munich's international defender Markus Babbel said yesterday that he was considering joining Newcastle United next season.

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mands. Babbel has appeared 28 times for Germany.

Real Betis have renewed their bid to sign the Finnish striker Jari Litmanen from Ajax, according to Spanish sources. The Seville-based side tried to sign Litmanen last season but finally opted for the Brazilian midfielder Demilson.

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SIDELINES

Coventry hunting for another landmark goal

THE EX-FILES

WHENEVER Everton and Coventry City meet, as they do tomorrow in what could be Goodison Park's last Premiership game for at least 15 months, chances are that television will re-run a goal which still rivals Keith Houchen's plunge into FA Cup folklore as the most famous in the Sky Blues' history.

It was 1970 and Everton, with Howard Kendall part of their vaunted midfield, were champions. But at Highfield Road they were floored by an exquisitely executed free-kick routine. Willie Carr's "donkey kick" was volleyed in by Eric Hunt, who had spent an unproductive six months with the Merseyside club two years earlier.

Others with Hunt's dual affinity include defenders Dave Clements, Brian Borrows, Peter Billing, Kenny Sansom and David Jones; midfielder Kevin Richardson, now playing under Jones' management at Southampton; and strikers Mick Ferguson and Bob Latchford, who on the equivalent day two decades ago reached 30 goals for the season in Everton's 6-0 rout of Chelsea.

The late Joe Mercer, a pre-war champion with Everton, served Coventry as general manager and director. Meanwhile, the "ex" factor tomorrow will be represented by the Coventry's former Everton full-back David Burrows. If he does not send his old club down, fatalistic Evertonians may expect Dion Dublin to do so, remembering how the board vetoed Kendall's bid to buy him during his second spell as manager.

Ten things that Everton's fiery Scot Duncan Ferguson might be missing today



1 His hometown, Stirling, one of Scotland's oldest towns.

2 Braveheart country, where William Wallace won the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297 against an occupying English army.

3 The legacy of Robert the Bruce, who defeated another English army at Bannockburn in 1314.

4 Stirling's River Forth, which is where, at best, Everton will try and try again to secure their Premiership safety tomorrow.

5 Stirling's James Kirk

gentlemen's outfitters, purveyors of kilts and sporran. They're clothes, Duncan, but not as we know them.

6 Stirling Castle.

7 The King Street hotel where Robert the Bruce's daughter faced a window by writing on it. At Goodison, the writing is mainly on the wall.

8 Distilleries a plenty.

9 The Trossachs.

10 Going down Stirling's Barton Bar and Bistro for a swift half. But he may soon be going down the First Division for a season of 92 halves.

NAME OF THE GAME No 34: THE MERRY MILLERS

Rotherham United's nickname was first used in the 1930s. It is believed to derive simply from their ground's name, Millmoor, although there have been suggestions that it had something to do with local flour mills. In recent times the Third Division club's nickname has been shortened to the Millers. "There hasn't exactly been much to be merry about lately," Gerry Somerton, the club historian, said.

THIS WEEK

ON 9 May 1987, Lincoln City became the first club to be automatically relegated to the Vauxhall Conference after losing 2-0 at Swansea City.

Lincoln's decline had been swift and cruel, having been relegated from the Third Division to the Fourth only the previous season, and having only entered the relegation zone the week prior to their demotion.

Speculation elsewhere that weekend surrounded another relegated side, Aston Villa, who ended the season at the foot of the First Division and were looking for a new manager. The ex-Manchester United man, Ron Atkinson, was the favourite, although Midhurst's Bruce Rioch and Wimbledon's Dave Bassett were also in contention. The outsider was Graham Turner, who had steered Wolves to the Fourth Division play-offs. (Another Graham, Taylor, actually ended up getting the job).

Also on Saturday, 11 years ago to the day, two sides (who have both been troubled recently) were experiencing different fortunes. Manchester City were relegated from the First Division (along with Villa and Leicester) while Everton, who had already secured the First Division title (with Liverpool second), faced their cake with a 3-1 win over Luton.

The only beaten finalists in the last four seasons not to have gone on to win promotion are Reading, who lost 4-3 to Bolton in the 1995 play-off final. Worse was to follow: last month they were relegated to the Second Division.

However, the trend is only a recent one. Just one of the first six beaten First Division play-off finalists went on to win the promotion they were seeking the following year.

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e-mail address: sport@independent.co.uk

31 days...
until the World Cup
finals begin in
France...

South Africa's coach, Philippe Troussier, has restored the international careers of four players who played key roles in the World Cup qualifying campaign but were dropped by the caretaker coach, Jomo Sono. For February's African Nations' Cup fixture, Troussier has included Eric Tinkler, who has recovered from a hamstring injury, and Fulham's reserve goalkeeper Andre Aranda, along with two strikers, Shaun Bartlett and Jerry Skhosana. Troussier also named the Dutch goalkeeper Hans Vonk and the German midfielder Marc Olde, who have recently taken South African citizenship. Both were born in South Africa but left the country at an early age.

Everton circus faces the Big Drop

The legacy of a power struggle at Goodison has sapped the team's ability to compete. Glenn Moore on the slide of a great club

THOSE Everton fans who watched enviously as Arsenal, having bumbled their team, carried the Premiership trophy around Highbury last week will be able to savour their own silverware parade at Goodison Park tomorrow.

But while a championship trophy and a cup will be on display, the afternoon is more likely to end in a mournful wake than a celebratory party as their club tries to avoid a unique treble.

Last month Everton ladies won the Women's Premier League, on Thursday the teenagers won the FA Youth Cup. Tomorrow the first team are favourites to be relegated from the top division for the first time in 47 years. Founder members of the League, champions in seven different decades and nine times in all, Everton have only missed four top-flight seasons in 110 years. Should they go down they will be the biggest name to be relegated since Manchester United in 1974.

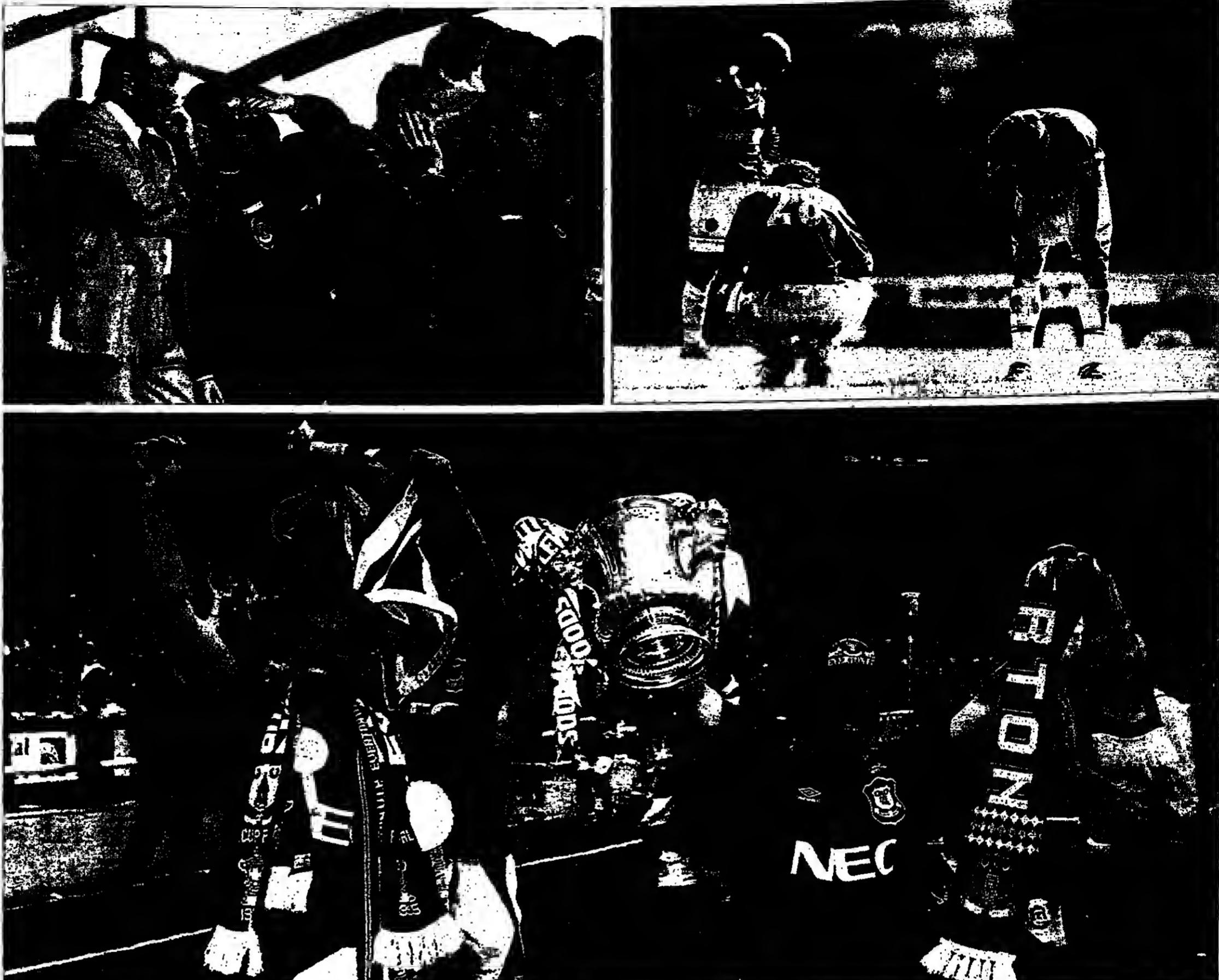
To avoid the drop they need to gain a point more against Coventry at Goodison than Bolton Wanderers can achieve against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. That might seem feasible but take into account Chelsea's preoccupation with their European Cup-Winners' Cup final, and Everton's vulnerability against the sort of pace Darren Huckerby has in abundance, and next season's local derby will probably be against Tranmere rather than Liverpool.

There was the usual talk, at Everton's suburban training ground this week, about "fighting to the last", but the mood is subdued rather than bullish reflecting the defeatism prevalent on the blue half of Merseyside. Though the team will still run out to the theme from *Z Cars* another by-gone anthem, Abba's "SOS", would be more appropriate.

The fans, though turning up in impressive numbers, are in despair. Six years of near-continual struggle has worn them down as it has the team. Some wonder whether relegation might prove a springboard for a new start but more look at the many parallels at Manchester City and fear a loss of status could be terminal.

Like City, who also have a dominant neighbour, Everton have endured boardroom and management upheaval resulting in a lack of direction. Many of the problems stem from the post-Heysel ban on English clubs. As domestic champions and European Cup-Winners' Cup holders in 1985 Everton fancied their chances in the European Cup. Instead Howard Kendall, frustrated at being unable to test himself abroad, soon left for Spain. Gary Lineker followed; Trevor Steven and Gary Stevens went to Rangers and the team broke up.

The 1987 title was their last League success and, by 1992, the club was fighting relegation. The Moores family, long the guiding influence, decided to sell their controlling stake in the club precipitating a lengthy power struggle between Peter Johnson, a local foodstuffs millionaire, chairman of Tranmere and former Liverpool season ticket-holder, and Bill Kenwright, the West End theatre impresario and lifelong Evertonian. Kenwright was the fans' choice, Johnson had the money. Eventually they did a deal with Johnson, for £20m, becoming chairman and ma-



Ups and downs: Paul Rideout (left, immediately above) and Joe Parkinson hold FA Cup after 1995 defeat of Manchester United; (top left) Howard Kendall (in grey suit) watches his side's 4-0 humiliation at Highbury last Sunday; (top right, left to right) Michael Ball, Slaven Bilic and Nick Barmby have that sinking feeling in the 3-1 home defeat to Sheffield Wednesday on 25 April

Photographs: Empics

jority shareholder and Kenwright staying on the board.

Initially this seemed to work. Johnson provided the finance to sign the likes of Daniel Amokachi and Duncan Ferguson and, after the popular Joe Royle replaced Mike Walker, Everton won the FA Cup. Further investment brought in Andrei Kanchelskis, Nick Barmby and Gary Speed but the team failed to gel. Royle fell out with the local media and, after Johnson refused to add to the huge transfer deficit by signing £1m in signing 13 players, most from the Nationwide or Central

sey where he contemplates cashing in on his investment – worth an estimated £50-£70m.

Johnson's public utterances are now rare, his opposition to the signature of John Spencer – after the player had undergone heart surgery to prove his fitness – being an uncom- mon revelation. Kendall, whose last spell at Goodison ended when the board refused to sanction a £1.5m bid for Dion Dublin, got his way over Spencer but he has still spent barely £1m in signing 13 players, most

from the Nationwide or Central Leagues. With nine players departing he has even made a small profit.

The turnover – of 18 players signed by Walker and Royle only three are in the team – means this is largely Kendall's side but the weaknesses of last year, a lack of pace in defence, guile in midfield and goals in attack, are yet to be solved. Instability has not helped – he has used 34 players – nor have problems with the senior men: Ferguson has played with an injury for months and, while still a handful, understandably lacks

sharpness; Bilic has been sent off three times; Barmby has been fitful.

More than 15,000 turned up at Goodison this week to clutch at the strands of hope provided by the youth team but Everton do not have a good record of bringing on young players. Their last FA Youth Cup winning side, in 1984, had a negligible impact, making only 22 Everton appearances between them. Only Ian Marshall, now at Leicester, went on to forge a decent career. More recently none of several promising players have established

themselves: John Ebbrell and Jon O'Connor have already been sold while Tony Grant and Michael Branch have been unable to gain a regular first-team place.

The new generation, led by Michael Ball, Gavin McCann, Richard Dunne and Danny Cadamarteri, look good, but it is easier to bed into a winning team than a losing one. Last week, after the home defeat to Sheffield Wednesday which, together with Bolton's win at Aston Villa, plunged the club towards relegation, Kendall pointedly criticised the lack of help the older players gave the youngsters.

Many fans have now lost faith in Kendall but, because of the enormous goodwill for his past deeds as player and manager, the bulk of their ire is aimed at Johnson. There were further demonstrations against him after Thursday's match and he will be given a four-man police guard from his Wirral home to Goodison – where precautions include removing the brass name plate identifying his office.

Johnson has never been forgiven his Liverpool links and banners like

the one at Anfield on Wednesday – "Agent Johnson: Mission accomplished" – do not help. Due to the unique relationship between Merseyside fans, an element of the Liverpool support would like to see Everton survive. But that did not stop chants of "come on Bolton" and "going down" on Wednesday.

The team have been given impressive support though the anger some fans showed at Highbury, when the players waved distantly at the travelling support rather than going across to them, suggests that, too, is fragile.

Everton had plenty of spirit at Highbury but, because of the enormous goodwill for his past deeds as player and manager, the bulk of their ire is aimed at Johnson. There were further demonstrations against him after Thursday's match and he will be given a four-man police guard from his Wirral home to Goodison – where precautions include removing the brass name plate identifying his office.

After that match Kendall, appalled at their lack of pride in his beloved club, argued with his players on the pitch. Everton went on to defeat Liverpool in their next match. The reprimands will be just as bitter if they fail tomorrow but atmosphere will not be so close at hand.

'Jiminho' ready for another day of reckoning

IF A WEEK is a long time in politics then a decade in football is an eternity. Consider the changing fortunes since the Foothill League's centenary year of two founder members, Bolton Wanderers and Everton, and especially those of Bolton's Jimmy Phillips.

In 1988, when Bolton went into the season's last day needing to win at Wrexham to claim the final automatic promotion place from the old Fourth Division, Phillips could only watch from a distance. A year earlier he had been sold to Rangers to finance a futile attempt to stay up.

That same May, Everton, still nominally the League champions, were looking wistfully towards the European Cup final between Benfica and PSV Eindhoven and wondering what might have been. Among the few Englishmen to beat the post-Heysel ban that season had been Phillips, who was in Rangers' rearguard when they

won in Kiev before a gathering of 100,000.

The narrowest of wins in Wales launched Bolton on the first step of what proved to be a rapid rise through the divisions.

A similar success at Chelsea tomorrow would not only ensure their Premiership survival, but also negate any victory Everton might achieve at home to Coventry.

One of the great "Super League" advocates would thus be relegated for the first time since Winston Churchill held the other premiership in 1951.

From Bolton's point of view,

the drama is about more than a Lancashire town team striving to consolidate among the corporate élite and, indeed, sending one of their number down in the process.

Since they last tried to put down roots at the highest level, a one-season blunder in 1995-96, they have crossed the Rutherford (or rather the boundary with Horwich). After 102

years at Burnden Park, a real state-of-the-art venue, they built the state-of-the-art Reebok Stadium.

Initially, the outcome of their struggle with Everton will be measured in human terms.

Years will flow and hearts grow heavy. But for Bolton, who spent £25m on constructing a futuristic home for the new millennium, the cost of failure would also be counted in concrete, steel and plastic.

If they were to slip into the club and their traditions, Bolton are not Sunderland. The gleaming white citadel just off the M61 could become a white elephant.

Not that Colin Todd and his team are thinking negatively.

They have won four of the last eight matches and are scoring freely. What is more, the fixtures seem to be falling into place nicely. Having received Crystal Palace five days after they were officially doomed, and duly dispatched them 5-2, Bolton sat back and watched Everton being taken apart at Arsenal's championship party.

Arduous though a finale at fourth-placed Chelsea may appear, their destiny is now in their own hands. Moreover, the London club's recent performances have led to Howard Kendall, the

Holdsworth have struggled to provide the requisite support for Nathan Blake, Taylor has contributed vital goals during two loan spells.

The player who has emerged as Bolton's most prized asset is the £25m-rated Alan Thompson, a Geordie midfielder with a lethal left foot. Yet there is no better symbol of the club's spirit and resilience than the one member of the squad actually born in the town, the same Jim Phillips.

The attacking left-back has seen it all since being taken on as an apprentice 15 years ago. When he made his full debut for the Wanderers, on the first day of 1984-85, only 4,400 were at Burnden to see it.

Three years later, as he settled into Ibrox as part of the Graeme Souness revolution, Bolton's free-fall led them to within one relegation of the Vauxhall Conference.

By the time he came home,

via Oxford and Middlesbrough, they were pushing for the Premiership under Bruce Rioch and Todd.

Last year, having been through two promotions and one demotion, he appeared to be on the way out when Todd bought first Robbie Elliott and then Mike Whittle to play in his position. Phillips, 32, could have left but decided he would rather be involved peripherally at Bolton than regularly in the lower echelons.

Then both newcomers succumbed to long-term injuries, and he came back to share, may star, in Bolton's spring revival.

Such has been the panache with which he has played that the fans who were barracking him last autumn have dubbed him "Jiminho".

When Bolton were struggling at 2-2 against Palace, he chested down a pass, swivelled and scored with a textbook half-volley to ease the tension.



It was, to coin a phrase, just like watching Brazil.

Phillips' first goal in four years was also a timely reminder to the management that his testimonial match, against Celtic, need not be his farewell.

Before he considers whether it is time to get on his bike, Bolton must stop the cycle of the euphoric rise followed by the instant fall. Make-or-break tomorrow beckons.

Dave Jones is proof you don't have to be a big name to get on



OLIVIA BLAIR
SINGS THE PRAISES OF SOME OF FOOTBALL'S UNSUNG HEROES

SO after 272 days, 6,488 hours and more 90 minutes than most of us can remember, it is almost all over bar the shouting (of which there will doubtless be a lot done during next week's Cup-Winners' Cup final, not to mention the play-offs). In truth, of course, this is the longest-ever football season, since there is hardly time to draw breath before the World Cup kicks off. But domestically, at least, the final whistle is nigh.

It has been business as usual this season. Bans and brawls, drink and drugs, friendships and not-so-friendships, injuries and comebacks, binnings and firings (42 managers got their marching orders) have all played their part. There have been highs and lows, successes and failures, winners and losers, heroes and villains.

And, of course, there have been unsung heroes. It's a term normally applied, with all due respect, to football's unglamorous stars; the likes of Martin Keown, the Garys - Pallister and Mabbett - and Carlton Palmer. But, in fact, football has more unsung heroes than most walks of life, and the following spring immediately to mind.

Never mind "Arsène Who?", it was "John Who?" when Gregory took over the Aston Villa reins from Brian Little, steering them quietly but quickly clear of the relegation danger. Down to the south coast, meanwhile, Southampton fans must be suffering from vertigo. More accustomed to peering down the relegation trap door, they've been craning their necks to-

wards Europe. Dave Jones won't be scared of the heights, having led Stockport to lofty perches last season but, like Gregory, he is proof that you don't have to be a big name to get on in this game.

Ditto Frank Sinclair who, despite his Jamaican connections, was the poor relation in Chelsea's jet-set squad. Yet his strike broke the deadlock in the Coca-Cola Cup final, just as his equaliser against Real Betis in the Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final sparked Chelsea's fightback. Sinclair was once the laughing stock of Stamford Bridge. Not so now.

Jason Lee knows all about being a laughing stock, but the man who once achieved unwanted notoriety for having a haircut the shape of a fruit that goes well with gammon had the last laugh this season;

it was his goal against Fulham that ultimately won Watford the Second Division championship.

Gary Jones' 28 goals have helped Notts County run away with the Third Division while goals from the veteran Steve Wood have been instrumental in ensuring Macclesfield's meteoric climb into the Second Division behind County.

It's been a forgettable season for Manchester City fans, but their loyalty has been an unforgettable asset of the Clydebank fans. The Bankies could win promotion from the Scottish Second Division today, but the fans have put long-term gain before short-term glory and stayed away in protest at the directors' handling of the club's affairs.

Bobbie has off too to Charlton, who have proved that small budget doesn't always equal small ambition; to Stockport, Crewe and Bury, who have shown that what comes up does not always have to go down again; to Jim Jefferies and his Hearts side, who came close to breaking the Old Firm domination in Scotland; to the West Ham board, whose faith in Harry Redknapp is at last starting to pay dividends; to undefeated League of Wales champions, Barry Town; to Channel 5, who were bold enough to broadcast England's World Cup qualifier against Poland and Chelsea's European run (only for the BBC to poach the final); to Northern League side Tow Law Iow, for reaching Wembley for the first time in its history (they play Tiverton Town in the FA Vase final today); to Everton's director of

youth coaching, Colin Harvey, for winning the FA Youth Cup (at least there's hope for Goodison's future); to Arsenal's Groundsmen of the Year, Steve Braddock, who won Highbury's first title of the season in April; and to Barnsley - down, but by never forgotten.

And with the World Cup in mind, we should perhaps applaud an unsung hero in the shape of the Italian striker, Christian Vieri, whose misplaced header in Rome ensured England's passage to France. And on a final note let's not forget the England World Cup song "On Top Of The World". Early signs are that it's unlikely to be afforded the heroic status of its predecessor, "Three Lions". In fact, it's more likely to remain - by the fans, at least - unsung.

Premiership team news

Aston Villa v Arsenal

Yorks 15 Leading scorer Bergkamp 22 Last season: 2-2

The Aston Villa midfielder Ian Taylor will almost certainly miss tomorrow's game with a thigh problem. Lee Hendrie, also taken off against Wednesday with a calf strain, should be fit to return in the midfield against Arsène Wenger's title-winning side. Goalkeeper Mark Bosnich is hoping to reclaim his place from Michael Oakes after a bout of flu. Villa are definitely without defenders Steve Staunton and Riccardo Scimeca, who both have hamstring injuries. Simon Grayson may move forward from defence to replace Taylor. Arsenal will have almost a full-strength team after Emmanuel Petit and Dutch winger Marc Overmars both passed fitness tests. With the title already won, manager Arsène Wenger rested six key players in midweek while Petit was out with a shin injury and Overmars nursing a damaged ankle. Wenger recalls Tony Adams, David Seaman, Martin Keown, Patrick Vieira, Nigel Winterburn and Nicolas Anelka. Ian Wright is likely to lead the attack alongside Anelka, with Liberian Chris Wreh on the substitutes' bench. The only significant omission will be the injured Dutchman, Dennis Bergkamp.

Barnsley v Manchester Utd

Redcar 14 Leading scorer Cole 24 Last season: No fixture

Danny Wilson has a full Barnsley squad to choose from his team's last Premiership match before their return to the Nationwide League. With no injury worries, Wilson can call on the services of the Macedonian international striker Georgi Hristov and central defender Chris Morgan. Both players are available again after completing three and five-match bans respectively. Barnsley have conceded 80 Premiership goals this season, 33 of them at home. Despite a brief rally earlier in the year they have picked up only one point from the last 12. Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson will make several changes tomorrow to give games to some of his fringe players. Henning Berg, John Curtis, Michael Oakes and Philip Mulryne are all likely to start. Rámon van der Gouw will continue in goal in place of Peter Schmeichel, who is troubled with his hamstring injury. Ole Gunnar Solskjær is suspended and Ronny Johnsen is recovering from his cartilage operation. Brian McClair could make an emotional final League start for United after being told his Old Trafford days are over.

Blackburn v Newcastle

Galashiels 20 Leading scorer Shearer, Barnes 7 Last season: 1-0

Billy McKinlay is available to help Blackburn attempt to secure their place in next season's UEFA Cup. The Scottish midfielder, who has been in doubt all week with an ankle injury, has been passed fit. Damien Duff will also be involved after coming through a check on an injured groin but captain Tim Sherrard has an ankle problem and will not play again this season. Manager Roy Hodgson must decide between goalkeepers John Filan, who has started the last three games, and fit-again Tim Flowers. Jeff Kenna played in an unfamiliar wing-back position last week but is likely to revert to full back at the expense of either Gary Croft or Patrick Valery. Kenny Dalglish will put out his strongest Newcastle side for the final Premiership game of the season, rejecting any notions he may play a weakened side with the FA Cup final against Arsenal less than a week away. Captain Rob Lee and defender Steve Howe have both responded well to treatment on their respective foot and calf injuries and should both start. The only member of the squad unlikely to be available is Darren Peacock, who has a calf injury.

Chelsea v Bolton

Vallis 18 Leading scorer Blake 14 Last season: No fixture

Frank Leboeuf has made an unexpected return from an ankle injury. He picked up the injury in last week's 3-1 defeat at Newcastle, but played 45 minutes in Kevin Hitchcock's testimonial against Nottingham Forest in midweek and is confident of being fit. Franco Zola continues to receive treatment in Italy on a grueling problem. Captain Dennis Wise has a toe injury. Michael Dubois is struggling to recover from an ankle problem, Graeme Le Saux has a calf strain and defender Andy Myers has a back problem. Bolton's player of the year, Andy Todd, could miss out on playing in tomorrow's relegation decider, because his father, manager Colm Todd, will not pick him. The defender is likely to be left on the bench. Todd Sr is expected to stick with Gerry Taggart - who came in when his son served a one-match ban - and kept his place as Bolton won their last two games. Bolton face worries over strikers Dean Holdsworth and Bob Taylor, who both face fitness tests on hamstring injuries ahead of the biggest day of their season.

Crystal Palace v Sheff Wed

Dyer 8 Leading scorer Di Canio 14 Last season: No fixture

Crystal Palace are likely to be without their French defender Véronique Ismael for their final Premiership game of the season (and of the near future). Ismael was injured in Tuesday's 3-3 draw with West Ham and that might mean ex-Wolves defender Jamie Smith coming in as right-wing-back and captain Marc Edwards switching into the middle. The England Under-21 and B squad striker Matt Jansen, who has made such an impression since joining from Carlisle earlier this season, could return from injury. Palace have won two of their last five League games and drawn one. Sheffield Wednesday's Ron Atkinson is likely to give his promising 19-year-old striker Francesco Sanetti his first start at Crystal Palace tomorrow. Sanetti made a stunning debut when coming on as a substitute in a 3-1 defeat at home to Aston Villa last weekend, scoring the Owls' consolation goal as well as hitting the woodwork. The Italian will play alongside compatriot Paolo Di Canio as Andy Booth is out through suspension following his dismissal against Everton two weeks ago. Wednesday have won one game in their last five.

...And statistics

Sunderland lead the way as gates soar

Middlesbrough's Paul Merson (right) takes on Stockport's Martin McIntosh. Despite their relegation from the Premiership last year Middlesbrough have continued to fill the Riverside Stadium every week, while Stockport saw their gates rise this season by nearly 30 per cent



Stadium: Boro Stadion

While football's resources have become increasingly concentrated on the Premiership in recent years, the game outside the top flight in England and Wales is also thriving.

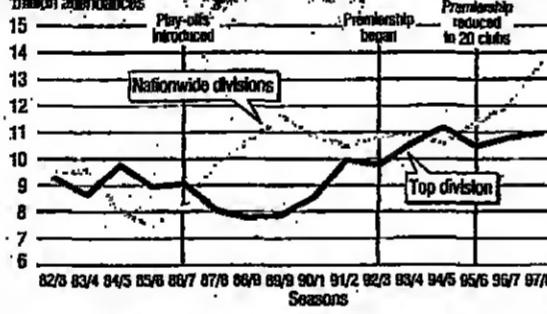
The three divisions beneath the Premiership enjoyed their best attendances this season for more than a quarter of a century. Crowds in the Nationwide League rose by 13.2 per cent on last season to reach a level not seen since the 1971-72 season.

The biggest rise was in the First Division, where crowds rose by 20.1 per cent to an average of 15,079. Although the major boost was provided by the division's biggest clubs (Sunderland, in a season following relegation, saw an increase of 64 per cent after their move to a new stadium), there were also increases in some unexpected quarters. Even Reading, the bottom club, enjoyed an increase of more than five per cent.

The Second Division average was up by nearly nine per cent, though the Third Division showed a small drop.

The returning millions

Football League attendances 1982-1997



Nationwide League attendances 1997-98

First Division

| | Avg gate 1997-98 | Avg gate 1996-97 | Per cent change | League position |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Sheffield United | 14,220 | 20,865 | +64.5 | 1 |
| Wolverhampton | 29,907 | 28,048 | +3.5 | 2 |
| Stockport | 26,753 | 24,542 | +8.7 | 3 |
| Wrexham | 23,253 | 24,763 | -5.4 | 4 |
| Nottingham Forest | 20,543 | 44,637 | -54.7 | 5 |
| Sheffield Wednesday | 18,751 | 17,751 | +5.6 | 6 |
| Southampton | 17,038 | 16,004 | +6.2 | 7 |
| West Brom | 16,002 | 16,004 | +0.0 | 8 |
| Leeds | 15,954 | 15,952 | +0.1 | 9 |
| Sheffield United | 14,945 | 12,955 | +17.7 | 10 |
| Derby | 14,023 | 11,953 | +24.6 | 11 |
| Nottingham Forest | 14,445 | 14,715 | -2.0 | 12 |
| Cardiff | 13,221 | 14,051 | -5.8 | 13 |
| Portsmouth | 13,063 | 12,554 | +4.0 | 14 |
| Blackburn | 12,145 | 12,175 | -2.5 | 15 |
| Portsmouth | 11,149 | 8,857 | +25.3 | 16 |
| Sheffield Wednesday | 9,676 | 9,160 | +5.5 | 17 |
| Swindon | 9,615 | 6,917 | +42 | 18 |
| Sheffield Wednesday | 8,632 | 7,681 | +13.4 | 19 |
| Stockport | 8,523 | 6,424 | +32.6 | 20 |
| Fryston | 8,000 | 8,727 | -8.5 | 21 |
| Oxford | 7,488 | 7,008 | +6 | 22 |
| Portsmouth | 6,178 | 4,502 | +36.7 | 23 |
| Crewe | 5,243 | 3,978 | +31.8 | 24 |
| Total | 15,079 | 12,957 | +15.1 | 20 |

Second Division

| | Avg gate 1997-98 | Avg gate 1996-97 | Per cent change | League position |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Watford | 11,533 | 8,894 | +29.7 | 1 |
| Millwall | 10,222 | 7,026 | +44.2 | 2 |
| Frederick | 9,458 | 9,411 | +0.5 | 3 |
| Sheffield Wednesday | 8,644 | 8,540 | +1.2 | 4 |
| Millwall | 7,023 | 7,743 | -9.3 | 5 |
| Sheffield Wednesday | 6,913 | 6,680 | +3.9 | 6 |
| Sheffield Wednesday | 6,866 | 6,628 | +3.6 | 7 |
| Luton | 5,779 | 6,781 | -13.3 | 8 |
| Doncaster | 5,700 | 7,045 | -20.7 | 9 |
| Wycombe | 5,414 | 5,232 | +3.5 | 10 |
| Cardiff | 5,305 | 5,440 | -2.4 | 11 |
| Playmouth | 5,223 | 6,465 | -18.0 | 12 |
| Blackpool | 5,212 | 4,987 | +4.5 | 13 |
| Brentford | 5,162 | 5,192 | -0.7 | 14 |
| Cheltenham | 4,749 | 4,639 | +2.4 | 15 |
| Harroway | 4,705 | 5,351 | -12.7 | 16 |
| Southend | 4,602 | 5,072 | -17.2 | 17 |
| Wrexham | 4,400 | 4,112 | +7.1 | 18 |
| Walsall | 4,062 | 3,892 | +4.4 | 19 |
| Wigan | 3,988 | 3,890 | +2.9 | 20 |
| York | 3,853 | 3,559 | +8.7 | 21 |
| Total | 15,079 | 12,957 | +15.1 | 20 |

Third Division

| | Avg gate 1997-98 | Avg gate 1996-97 | Per cent change | League position |
|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|



SPORT

Saturday 9 May 1998

Wales look abroad as Bowring exits

Rugby Union

By Robert Cole

THE odds were always against Kevin Bowring staying for the duration of his contract as national coach and yesterday he and Wales parted company.

The Welsh Rugby Union has lost six coaches in 10 years, an unstable situation which has been mirrored by some dire performances on the field.

Two days before his 44th birthday, Bowring was informed that a list of demands he had

presented to the Union in a bid to improve his position were unsuitable and the technical committee had no option but to bring his tenure to a close.

Now the search begins for a replacement but, barring the highly unlikely scenario of a World Cup triumph on home soil in November next year, the new incumbent may also find himself on shifting ground.

By then Wales will have a new 75,000 all-seater stadium, but the question all rugby fans in the principality will be asking is: can they produce a team

to match their luxurious surroundings?

Bowring was a safe choice and an honest man but what let him down in the end was a lack of charisma and a failure to motivate his players for the big occasion.

In a statement, Bowring was said to have "no regrets about being national coach, and only wishes that better results could have been achieved".

Record-breaking defeats by New Zealand before Christmas and England and France in this season's Five Nations meant

that, although he had achieved his objective of two wins in the championship, he was no further down the road to developing a side to cope with the world's best.

It is not all Bowring's fault. He was hampered by the lack of a truly competitive league structure in Wales and the continuing conflict between the clubs and the Union.

Bowring's demand that he be allowed to keep the players away from their clubs during the duration of next year's Five Nations was something that the Union could never adhere

too without provoking the ire of the Premier Division elite.

There were other unsatisfactory demands, too, which Bowring had little hope of seeing met, particularly when negotiating from a position of weakness.

So who's next? If Wales do go to South Africa then they are almost less certain to go with a makeshift coach or coaches.

Mike Ruddock, the man in charge at Leinster, and Dennis John, the Pontypridd coach,

would be the likely pairing. But as much as anything, Wales need a credible personality to

make the best of their limited resources.

Welsh fans are now used to losing, but their minimum demands are to reach the quarter-finals of the World Cup and to become more competitive.

"We are after the best available coach in the world and, if required, we are prepared to invest significant financial resources to ensure we get the best," Glamorgan Griffiths, the WRU chairman, said.

The problem may be finding someone who actually wants the job – money or no money.

Although Terry Cobner, the Director of Rugby, denied

Dwyer was in the frame the Union's technical director Geoff Evans spent a good hour recently grilling a Welsh journalist about the Australian's credentials.

"We are after the best available coach in the world and, if required, we are prepared to invest significant financial resources to ensure we get the best," Glamorgan Griffiths, the WRU chairman, said.

The problem may be finding someone who actually wants the job – money or no money.

Tetley's Cup final preview, Page 19



Bowring: Failed to motivate players for the big occasion.

Survival the sole concern at Goodison

Football

By Trevor Haylett

THE way forward last summer, according to the Everton chairman Peter Johnson, was the recruitment of a "world class" coach and exotic players to match, but after 12 months in which they went backwards for a "new" manager and made less progress than the Conservative Party, Evertonians will be grateful tomorrow just to acknowledge their achievement in standing still.

Should they avoid relegation and consign Bolton to the First Division instead, the blue half of Merseyside will give three lusty cheers and then attempt to cover their embarrassment. For a club who still optimistically perceive themselves as part of football's élite, a finishing position of 17th is no basis for respectability let alone celebration.

For Everton's Lancastrian rivals, however, retaining their Premiership place would denote a significant step forward, a cause for genuine rejoicing. Survival was an ambition that proved beyond Bolton two years ago, has defied the efforts this time of the two other promoted sides, Barnsley and Crystal Palace, but which is now within reach after a reviving run which has gathered 16 points in the last nine games.

Going into the last day

Bolton hold a one-point advantage, but they have the tougher finale with a trip to Chelsea while Everton host Coventry. Then again, Coventry, having gone down to the wire on so many occasions, are programmed to give their utmost on the last afternoon while Chelsea's minds, if not their bodies, will already be in Stockholm where on Wednesday they hope to add the Cup-Winners' Cup to their Coca-Cola trophy.

So perhaps the omens are pulling in favour of Colin Todd's team whose escape plus gained fresh momentum last Saturday when victory over Crystal Palace lifted them out of the bottom three for the first time since December and put Everton in their place. The Merseysiders' pitiful capitulation at Highbury the following day merely raised the confidence quotient at their Recbock Stadium higher still.

A Bolton win will sever Everton's ties with the top flight after 44 years no matter the result against Coventry. If Colin Todd's team go down at Stamford Bridge they will return to the First Division on goal difference assuming that Howard Kendall, in his third spell at Goodison, can inspire at least a draw from his side.

The Premier League have made contact with Chelsea this week to remind them of their responsibilities to the rest of the Premiership and the requirement to field a full-strength

team. However, Todd believes that whoever is wearing home colours will provide formidable opposition.

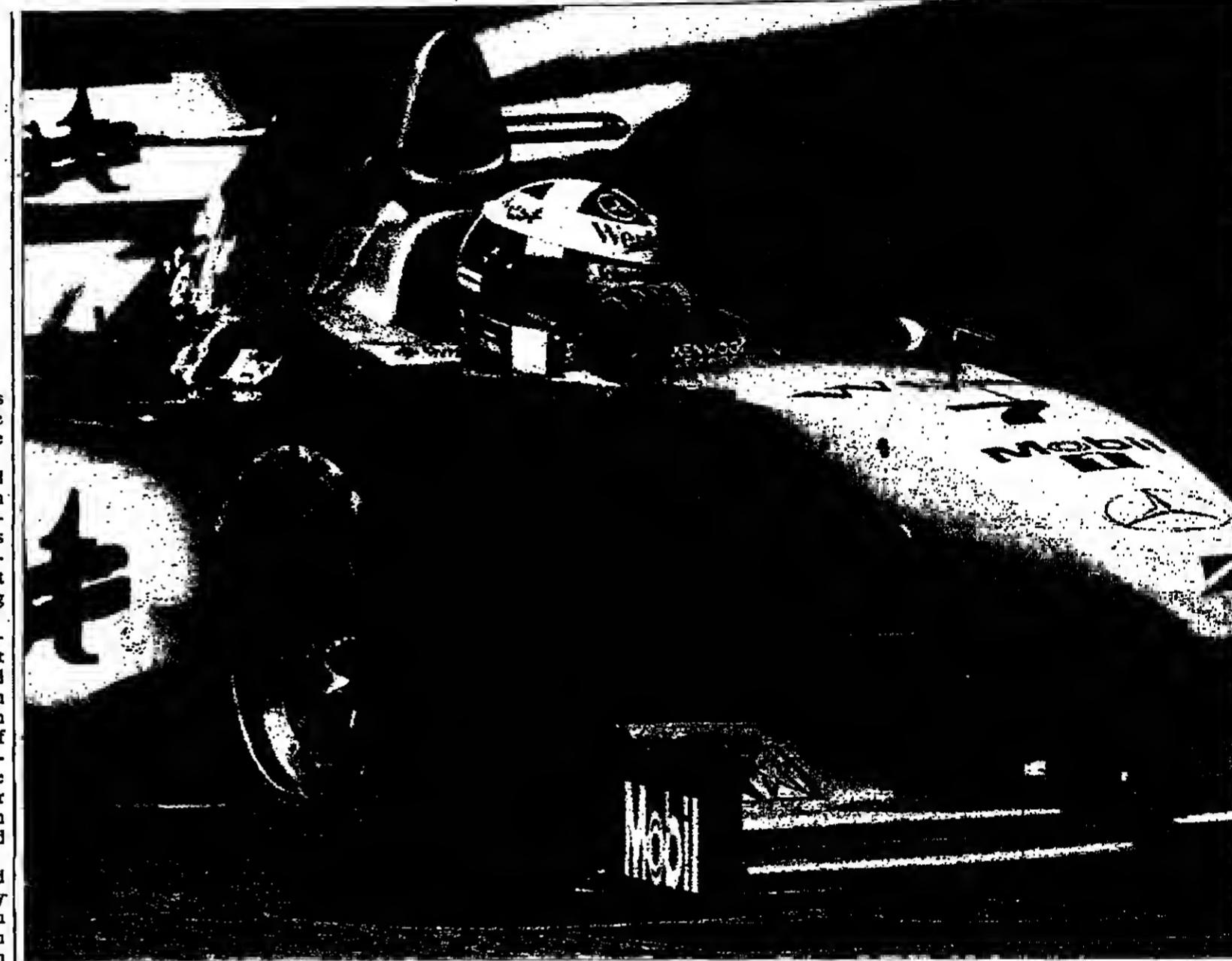
Chelsea have a large squad and the vast majority of them have all figured in the Premiership at some point this season," said the Bolton manager. "Whatever side they put out we know that it's still going to be a difficult job."

Merseyside Police have contingency plans in place should all end in tears at Goodison and the chairman, Johnson, come in for more abuse. Protests from supporters seem inevitable if Everton do go down. Seven police officers will be situated in the directors' box and will be under orders to accompany Johnson out of the ground before the end of the game if necessary.

The issue of weakened teams is also troubling Harry Redknapp, whose West Ham might lose out on a European place to Blackburn and Aston Villa with their rivals facing the FA Cup finalists Newcastle and Arsenal respectively.

"I know both Arsenal and Newcastle have the FA Cup final to look forward to but I would hope that they do the decent thing", Redknapp said. "In 1992 when we held Manchester United 1-1 on the final day and Blackburn clinched the title I could have played a few kids but I felt it was my responsibility to put out my best side."

Everton circus, page 22



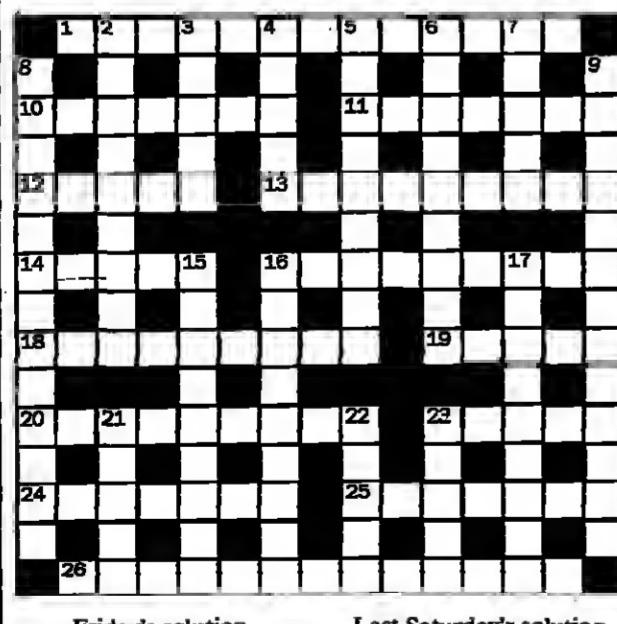
In the groove: David Coulthard pilots his McLaren around the Barcelona track in practice for tomorrow's grand prix

Photograph: AFP

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3606, Saturday 9 May

By Mass



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

FOREST SOUTHERN
MAGNAE DOMUS
CONSTANTINE
TYSER CRIME
LOWER GUINEAPIG
IAOMES BE
FALLINGTOPLACE
NIRI
SIGNSATREME
AEROPORT
GLENTELE MUSCA
LINDHOL
CATION STAIRS
NUCLEAR
ARGOSY BYTICHEMAY

ACROSS

- 1 Fourth-rate in old games till trained to become this? (4,9)
- 10 Impose measure favouring the Establishment (7)
- 11 South, in chance of success, makes a call (5,2)
- 12 'Drown one's sorrows' is about right for such? (5)
- 13 Rep theatre's opening — cause of confusion (9)
- 14 Group in church? (5)
- 15 Discharge old lag carrying couple of notes? (9)
- 18 I take it tares spread, and nettles? (9)
- 19 Mushrooms? Enjoyable, the man said? (5)
- 20 United, signified by Indian pipes (2,7)
- 22 Second opinion almost gets the picture? (5)
- 24 Drug action's different with Ecstasy added? (7)
- 25 Like one story we're told, of Eastern origin (7)
- 26 They'll suss out one-good at informing gamblers? (13)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive handwritten copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. All wordy snarkies must be posted next Saturday. Send solutions to: Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4918, The Times, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5HL. Please use the box address and postcode and give your postcode. Last week's winners: M Whitman, Brighton; M Merrick, Sutton; O Dave-Frompson, Boston; T McBride, Kingston-upon-Thames; N Wilkinson, Surbiton.

DOWN

- 2 Sicky shade of blue? (3-6)
- 3 Grand featured in dreadful lament (5)
- 4 Pick some tiresome lecturer? (5)
- 5 Unions in time-wasting actions (losing day) (9)
- 6 Like a notebook recording an autumnal feature? (3-4)
- 7 Fibre for rope and new sails? (5)
- 8 What a piffing fence! (5,8)
- 9 Canine resting? That's different from doggedness? (13)
- 15 It could be well-thumbed, by the way? (5-4)
- 16 Sociable? Once sober, gadabout appears inward? (5)
- 17 After October roster should be put up — one introducing changes? (9)
- 21 Bird with new crest? (5)
- 22 Use abusive words in insult about North? (5)
- 23 Steamy film packed with love? (5)

IF THERE is a sporting nirvana, then McLaren-Mercedes are likely to find it here tomorrow. The rest appear condemned to a respectful distance.

Mike Hakkinen and David Coulthard, first and second in the world championship, were just that in practice for the Spanish Grand Prix yesterday, seemingly going through the motions. An improbable third fastest was Johnny Herbert, driving a Sauber, but then that is Friday for you. Any day of a racing weekend, especially Sunday, is likely to be a good day for McLaren.

And even more so here. As Coulthard has observed, he knows this place better than Silverstone, having virtually moved in for winter testing.

The only issue appears to be: which McLaren will win the race and lead the championship going to Monaco. Hakkinen won the first two races and was second in Argentina, but Coulthard's victory in the San Marino Grand Prix, a fortnight

ago, lifted him to within three points of the Fim and suggested he might have tilted the psychological balance.

That is the interpretation of Damon Hill, Britain's last world champion. Hill, consigned to a bit-part with Jordan, believes his compatriot and former team-mate has the momentum and the ingredients to beat Hakkinen.

"David has definitely got what it takes to win the Championship," Hill said. "He has an excellent chance of cracking it. As we stand here now, I would put my money on David."

"I think David has taken the psychological advantage. Massively. After the first two races Mike will have thought it was easy. Everything was looking chunky-dory for him. He must have thought he had it in the bag. But then David was the quicker in Argentina and really moved in for winter testing.

And even more so here. As Coulthard has observed, he knows this place better than Silverstone, having virtually moved in for the year.

Herbert's sights are set high, even if he does not anticipate third place again in this afternoon's qualifying session. "I am hoping for a top 10 qualifying position, top six would be a dream," he said.

Ferrari spent most of their

championship McLaren can only throw away.

Hill had to resist a developing threat from his Williams team-mate, Jacques Villeneuve, to fulfil his championship ambition in 1996 and, in a sideswipe at McLaren, he urges Coulthard to break off the experience.

"I just hope David enjoys it and doesn't get too tied up in McLaren-speak. He's got a lot of personality and so has Mike,"

Hill said. "Mike should show that and for that they are told to say. The problem there is that you see, as drivers have to toe the start line, for the benefit of sponsors. They should be allowed to be themselves."

McLaren, who had unproductive tests with McLaren last season when he was stranded in 14th place yesterday, patiently wanted to get that off his chest. Corporation McLaren have the car of the year.

"I think David has taken the psychological advantage. Massively. After the first two races Mike will have thought it was easy. Everything was looking chunky-dory for him. He must have thought he had it in the bag. But then David was the quicker in Argentina and really moved in for winter testing.

The only issue appears to be: which McLaren will win the race and lead the championship going to Monaco. Hakkinen won the first two races and was second in Argentina. He's learned a lot since we were team-mates. He's matured as a person and a driver."

Schumacher hovered in third place in the title standings, doubtless hoping to pick up the scraps of a domestic skirmish, and just now it looks like a

Venus triumphs in latest bout of sibling rivalry

Tennis

Rome yesterday, there was little sign of sisterly affection at the post-match handshake.

Venus, the American No 9 seed, took just an hour and a quarter to become the first semi-finalist at the women's Italian Open and a visibly irritated Serena barely touched her 17-year-old sister's hand before collecting her rackets and strid-

ing off the centre court. "In Melbourne, it did feel different playing against my sister, but today it felt much more like playing against any opponent," said the unseeded Serena.

Like their previous meeting, the match was more memorable for the sight of two sisters slugging it out in public than for the quality of the tennis.

Playing her first tournament on red clay in Europe, the 16-year-old Serena was able to show only occasional glimpses of the form which had accounted for the 12th seed, Nathalie Tauziat, in the first round and, remarkably, for the four-times Italian champion Conchita Martínez.

Conchita's mark, page 19



YOUR MONEY

Personal finance, motoring and property

Saturday 9 May 1998

Hitting the tourist trail

Travellers heading off the beaten track this summer face a fourfold rise in travel insurance. Paul Slade reports on a little noticed tax hike

A holiday off the beaten track is a dream for millions of travellers who don't wish to undergo the regimented experience of package trips abroad. Increasing numbers of holidaymakers achieve that dream. Yet, thanks to a little-noticed measure announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, in his last Budget, those of us who avoid package tours will face a fourfold rise in tax on our travel insurance this summer. One in five travellers will be hit.

The tax hike on travel insurance hits cover bought from brokers or banks. The tax added to your premiums when you buy from these outlets rises from 4 per cent to 17.5 per cent on 1 August.

The change will bring the Treasury extra tax of just £1.5m in a full year. But experts warn that, for the most part, it is holidaymakers who must pay the price. Robert Smith of Douglas Cox Tyrie (DCT), a firm of brokers, says: "Certainly, our insurers are not going to be able to carry it. And, with such a big difference from 4 per cent to 17.5 per cent, there's no way we can absorb it either."

On DCT's estimates, the rise means a family of two adults and three children planning a 17-day trip outside Europe will pay £115.55 instead of the current £102.25 for their cover.

Travel insurance will pay out if you lose your belongings while on holiday, have your holiday delayed, or have to cancel for reasons beyond your own control. But by far the most important element is that it will pay your medical bills if you fall sick or have an accident while abroad. This is particularly valuable outside the European Union, where you will not be able to rely on reciprocal arrangements between your host country and the NHS.

Paul Sparks, of TSB General, the general insurance arm that is part of Lloyds Bank/TSB Group, says: "If you're abroad and you become sick or injured, without travel insurance, you can be financially ruined. I think it's something most people will still feel they have to have, but they will not be happy they've got to pay this extra tax."

If you are a frequent traveller, and buy insurance cover for a whole year at a time, it may make sense to buy your next policy before 1 August to lock in your cover at the lower rate for the next 12 months.

Smith says up to 20 per cent of travellers buy their insurance from banks or brokers, and that these buyers tend to be independent-minded. "Perhaps they're bored with the average package holiday, and looking for something a little bit different," he says. "They're fairly streetwise, and used to shopping around."

The increase in tax puts these travellers on the same footing as people buying from travel agents and tour operators, where premiums have been taxed at 17.5 per cent since 1 April, 1997. Their rate of tax was increased to combat what Customs & Excise saw as creative accounting.

Mr Smith believes that brokers and banks will continue to offer better deals. He says: "Products bought direct are still likely to be cheaper, because the travel agent is putting a fairly hefty mark-up on it. Buying direct will still be a better deal for the customer."

Awash in a sea of Rolexes and camcorders

Travel insurance is there to protect people in the event of unforeseen accidents and minor tragedies that can befall anyone holidaying abroad. Most of us will never need to make a claim on our cover. But a minority will have cause to.

And, as far as even smaller minority is concerned, if all the claims for lost property were to be believed, Florida would be knee-deep in video cameras and the beaches of the Cote d'Azur awash in Rolex watches.

The medical cover also attracts its share of fraudsters. Here are just two examples of criminal claims, taken from the files of insurer Home & Overseas:

■ A Glasgow man submitted more than 10

claims for £2,500 tailor-made suits which he claimed had been lost in transit by various airlines. He used a pad of receipt he had acquired from a real tailor. He was caught after the police raided his home and discovered a cabinet full of claim forms and a leaflet entitled *How to make £2,000 on your holiday*.

■ A London woman claimed for loss of sight in her left eye five times over a period of 18 months. The accidents she reported included a street attack in Tehran, falling off a chair while trying to get her suitcase out of the loft and having someone fall on her in a swimming pool. She pocketed more than £100,000 from insurers before being caught and sentenced to 18 months in prison.

How not 2 b a smart investor

Nic Cicutti finds that Barclays' new baby, b², offers its customers more style than substance

Millions of risk-averse bank and building society customers are to be targeted by a new, "hip" subsidiary of Barclays Bank, offering equity-linked products that guarantee money back should stock markets fall.

Barclays has set up b², a telephone-based operation which aims to wean savers away from an ingrained tendency to stash their cash in deposit accounts.

According to b², 4 million Britons "lost" an average £2,700 each by not investing in the stock market. Although they made £246 in interest pay-

ments from their accounts, had they placed their money in shares they would have gained 10 times that much.

To win them over, b² will offer an advanced savings account (ASA), a fund that can be placed in a tax-free PEP or new Individual Savings Account from April 1999. Unlike typical savings accounts, this one gives investors limited exposure to the stock market through its Stock Market Growth Fund, which aims to outperform the FTSE 100 share index.

But, unlike most equity funds, the ASA guarantees that should the market fall during one of three investment periods—three, five or seven years—savers' money will be returned in full.

Mark Bogard, managing director of b², says: "Many people feel that they could make more of their money than in the building society. They simply don't feel confident or com-



will deliver that. It's a small name that stands for a big idea."

forable to do anything about it.... We have spoken to thousands of savers and found they wanted that gap bridged by a company with the know-how, security and stability of a blue-chip financial provider. Savers want something safe but exciting, b²

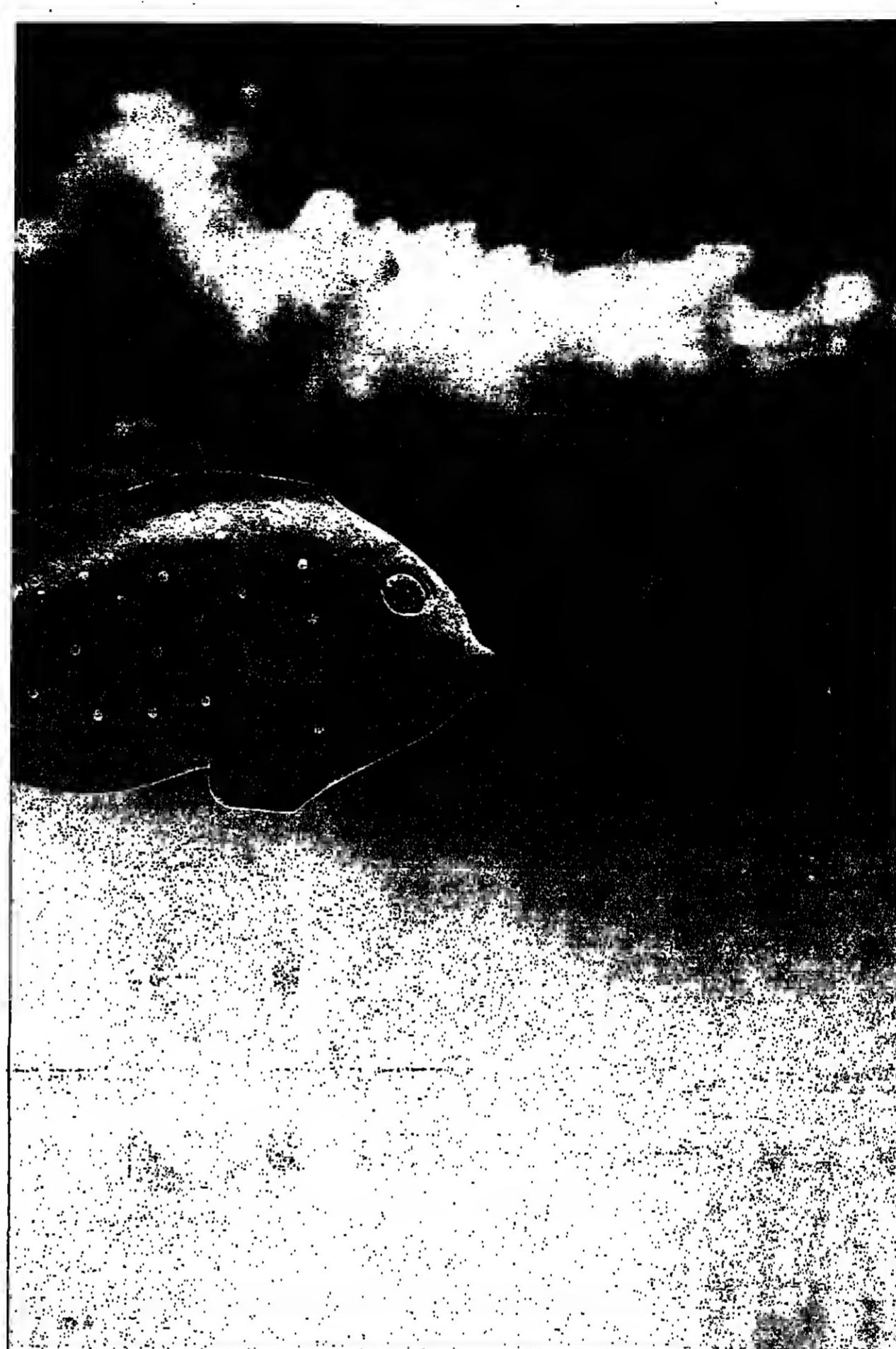
buys a derivative product which is used to meet the guarantee of a return of funds if stock markets should fall.

Whereas other guaranteed funds set a 5 per cent cap on potential losses each quarter, the ASA returns funds in full—but only as long as the money is left invested over the pre-agreed period referred to earlier.

Otherwise, the guarantee will only cover 85 per cent of a fund's value: if stock markets fall by more than that—tough.

The cost of this guarantee is extremely high. Typically, between 5 and 8 per cent of the sum invested is used to buy the derivatives to protect the capital. In the case of b², it is between 13.7 and 13.9 per cent.

The effect of this is simple: if the Stock Market Growth Fund were to rise by 45 per cent over three years, a reasonable bull run, the value of a £100 investment would be £124.84,



Fishing for revenue: From 1 August, travel insurance will be taxed at 17.5 per cent rather than 4 per cent

Photograph: Frank Orel/Tony Stone Images

The Chancellor's travel sting

| | Europe | Worldwide |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Single Trip Cover (17 days) | Current premium | New premium |
| Two adults: | £29.90 | £129.90 |
| Two adults and three children: | £189.79 | £278.04 |
| Two adults, one over 65: | £79.90* | £154.44 |

Travel premium changes showing August 1, 1998. Increase in insurance premium tax to 17.5 per cent on policies bought from banks or brokers. Excludes ski cover. Assumes that adults are under 65 unless otherwise stated and that children are aged between 2 and 17.

Source: Douglas Cox Tyrie

INDEX

Closed banks

The Government this week launched an investigation into high street banks and threatened to toughen the existing Banking Code of Practice after complaints that some institutions are failing to deal openly with their customers.

Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said she was "extremely concerned" about claims that some banks are not telling their customers about different accounts.

The probe also follows angry protests from clients of Northern Rock, the former building society, who claim they have been switched between accounts without their consent.

Eager savers

Research by Alliance & Leicester has managed to find a strong "will to save" among 18 to 26-year-olds. People in their late 20s and 30s also said they wanted to save more. To cater for this hitherto invisible band of young savers, Alliance & Leicester is launching a new account with the option of saving by monthly standing order over one, two or three years.

Finer China

Which is worth more: a transfer-printed copy of a Chinese blue and white tea bowl, made in Staffordshire in about 1815, or an original one made in China in the mid-18th century with the design painted by hand? As John Windsor explains on page 3, they are worth about the same. And both are eminently collectable.

Well endowed?

Will your endowment policy be worth enough to pay off your mortgage when it matures? These and a range of other questions about with-profits policies are analysed in a special feature by Nic Cicutti on pages 6 and 7.

Thought for the day

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Barclays' new deal fails to square up

NIC CICUTTI

Every now and then someone comes along with a new idea that changes the way we perceive the world of personal finance.

More than a decade ago, Direct Line did it with car and home insurance, which it decided to sell over the telephone. First Direct, a subsidiary of Midland Bank, has taken since 1989 to achieve the same with telephone banking but appears to have succeeded at last.

Virgin did it a few years ago, when it launched its low-cost tracker PEP, also available over the phone. The company's product has now been superseded by better ones, but its initiative forced others to follow suit. The slew of supermarket banks - Tesco, Sainsbury's, Safeway - in the past 24 months is another marketing idea which combines simplicity with a good deal for savers.

Will we see b², the new subsidiary of Barclays Bank, in a similar way in a few years' time? Anything is possible, of course, but I doubt it. Perhaps I should clarify my view: I hope not, for were it to happen it would be a sign that the British investing public has opted for a mediocre deal wrapped up in supposedly "cool" typography and design.

Details of the b² product are reported on our front page. Essentially, what the company says it is offering is a hybrid product, with the potential of better returns than a building society account, similar risks and the same ease of access.

But the reality is that almost anyone considering an investment into this sort of fund is unlikely to want to use it as some sort of instant access account. They will

want to commit their money for the longer term and, mostly, be prepared to leave it untouched for several years in the USA. If so, despite the much-vaunted accessibility of the b² account - 7am to 10pm, seven days a week - most people other than a few loonies and show-offs will tend to stick with more regular calling times. Yet they will still pay for a "service" they never use.

Moreover, the b² offering is worse, in terms of its exposure to any potential stock market gains, than many of its rival products. Unless the present bull market continues for the next seven years, potential returns are unlikely to be that exciting.

Over shorter periods of time, it is worth remembering another company which sold a three-year guaranteed fund in the early 1990s. Scottish Provident vacuumed up hundreds of millions of pounds from savers who subscribed to several branches of its Capital Guarantee Bonds. Yet when the bonds matured, in most cases the money would have done better had it been left in a building society. Some deal.

There is also something slightly sad about Barclays owing up to the fact it can't attract punters under its own steam and has to come up with another name and trendy imagery to do so.

If so, I'm not convinced this is a winner. It smacks too much of corporate forty-somethings devising a strategy to target a market of fiftysomethings who want to be thirtysomethings. Mark Bogard, managing director at b², calls it "safe but exciting". I call it William Hague with a baseball cap.

MONEY MAKEOVER

Plans to maximise lump-sum savings

THE MAKEOVER

Name: Patricia Willmot

Age: 57

Occupation: Call co-ordinator for a large company

The problem: Pat recently inherited about £30,000, which she has placed mostly in bank or building society accounts. She also has shares from Halifax and share options from her work worth £20,000. After planning for potential emergencies she wants to invest her surplus funds, which include bank and building society deposit accounts, in the most useful way possible.

The solution: A reserve fund needs to be set aside. Thereafter, it makes sense to sell the shares and use this money, plus whatever is left from the inheritance, to diversify into other collective investments and spread her risk.

Patricia Willmot is divorced with two grown-up daughters. She has worked for her employer for 19 years and currently earns £34,700 a year in a senior administrative role which provides her with private healthcare, a share option scheme and a final-salary pension scheme with a retirement age of 65. Pat would like to work until 65, but is worried a merger of her company lead to her being made redundant.

In addition to her Halifax shares and share options, plus her deposit accounts and £3,000 in a Tessa, Pat is paying £178 a month into a Halifax personal equity plan (PEP), and two with-profit endowments with Standard Life, set to mature in 2002 and 2007. Her home is valued at £100,000, on which she has a mortgage of £66,000 on a three-year discount which she is part-way through. She is fairly risk-averse.

To protect herself (and the mortgage) against the threat of illness, Pat pays £188 a month for a critical illness policy which would pay out £66,000 in the event of her suffering one of a range of serious illnesses.

The adviser: James Bruce, an independent financial adviser who is a member of the Institute of Financial Planning and the Society of Financial Ad-



Patricia Willmot could save over £100 a month by rethinking her critical illness insurance

Photograph: Keith Dobney

visers. His company, Corporate and Personal Planning, is based at Highways Square, Highwoods, Colchester, Essex (01206 841176).

The advice: Pat has several objectives. She wants to establish an emergency fund and would like a new kitchen in her home, which might cost up to £10,000. She also wants to review her existing investments and invest any other surplus as appropriate. A review of her expenditure shows she might have £100 or so available for regular investment each month.

Generally, the size of emergency funds one has is up to the individual, although I regard three months' expenditure as a suitable guideline. In this instance, I would suggest £5,000 and would recommend this money is placed in a C&G postal account, which offers a competitive rate of interest.

As for the kitchen, as Pat can

plan ahead she can afford to tie

up the funds in notice account, which should give her a higher rate of interest. On balances of £10,000, Halifax pays a gross rate of interest of 7.3 per cent. (Source: Money Facts, April 1998). A marginally higher rate of interest, cur-

Therefore, it makes sense to think in terms of investments. Her shares have been acquired by chance and do not really offer a reasonably diversified, actively managed portfolio. We typically recommend people achieve these two aims through

This leaves a balance of about £26,000. My advice would be to look at fixed-interest funds for about £12,000 of this money. A good fund for this would be Exeter's Zero Preference unit trust, which aims to produce steady capital growth with minimal risk. In the past five years it has achieved returns of 9.1 per cent.

I would then recommend that about £8,000 be placed in managed funds, which will provide a balance of fixed interest and equity-based exposure. The Framlington Managed Distribution unit trust aims to combine an above-average level of income with long-term capital growth.

The current split of the fund means a majority is invested in UK equities, with the balance in fixed-interest securities and cash. Over the past three years it has achieved annualised growth rates of about 13.4 per cent, with income of about 4.2 per cent a year. However, this

collective investments such as investment trusts.

Therefore, my advice to Pat would be to dispose of her existing Halifax and company shares. She should then top up her contributions into her Halifax PEP, with a payment of £3,864, to maximise her current year's allowance of £6,000. Then, I would suggest placing £1,800 into Pat's Tessa, to maximise her Tessa allowance.

money can be reinvested until an income option becomes necessary later on.

Finally, I would go for a direct equity fund. Gartmore's British Growth unit trust focuses on top-notch UK equities. Typically, blue-chip stocks make up about 70 per cent of Gartmore's portfolio. Again, the performance of this fund has been above-average in its sector for several years. My advice is that £6,000 be placed in this fund.

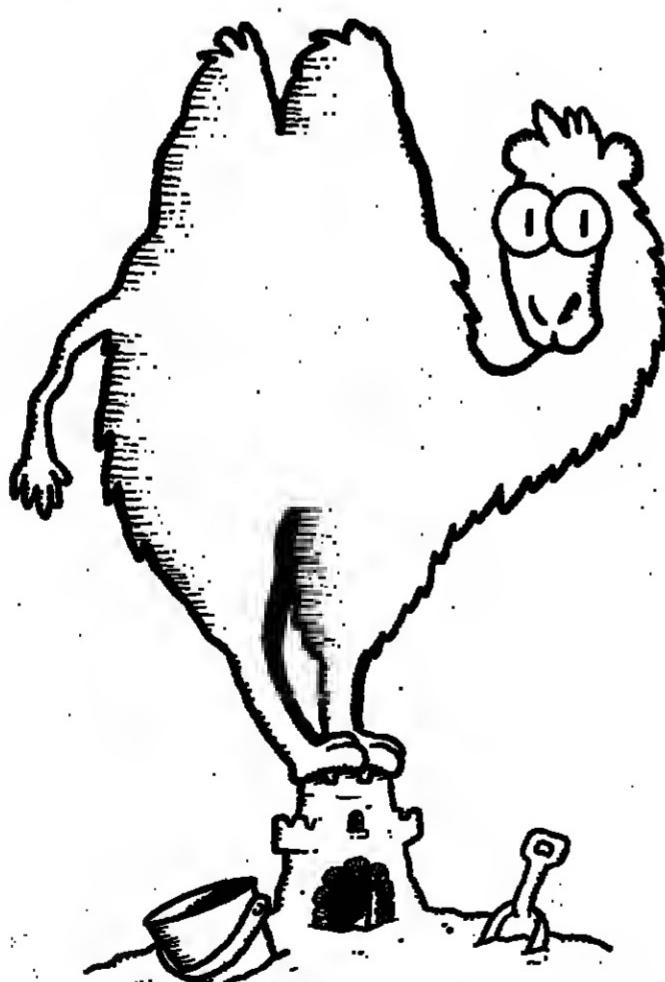
My recommendation is that the last two investments be placed within a Skandia Multi-FUND wrapper. Skandia is an insurance company which offers a choice of about 100 funds from 11 large companies. It also offers six-monthly valuations, annual income reporting, a freephone desk and helpline.

There are extra charges levied by Skandia for this service, on top of the annual fund management fee. But for someone who might be seeking regular reviews and active management - that is, the option of switching from one fund to another to maximise out-performance and minimise poor returns, Skandia's option involves no charge for switching, save any bid-offer spread, on which a discount has usually been negotiated.

Pat says she can save £100 a month. My suggestion is that the money be divided equally between Newton Fund Managers Income and Jupiter Fund Managers' European unit trusts, to achieve even greater fund diversity. Again, these funds have delivered consistent above-average performance. Here, too, I would advise the investment take place under the Skandia wrapper.

Lastly, Pat indicated that she pays £188 a month for her critical illness policy with Halifax. I would suggest that a term-based policy, linked to the number of years she has left on her mortgage, would be much cheaper. A similar critical illness policy with another provider for nine years, when her endowments mature, could cost as little as £66 a month, a considerable cost saving.

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True blue investments

Collect to invest:

Prices at auction are rising as the British love affair with blue and white china is rekindled, writes John Windsor

You can buy a transfer-printed copy of a Chinese blue and white tea bowl, made in Staffordshire in about 1815, for £60-£80 at auction. What would be the cost of an original - made in China in the mid-18th century and with the pagoda design painted by hand?

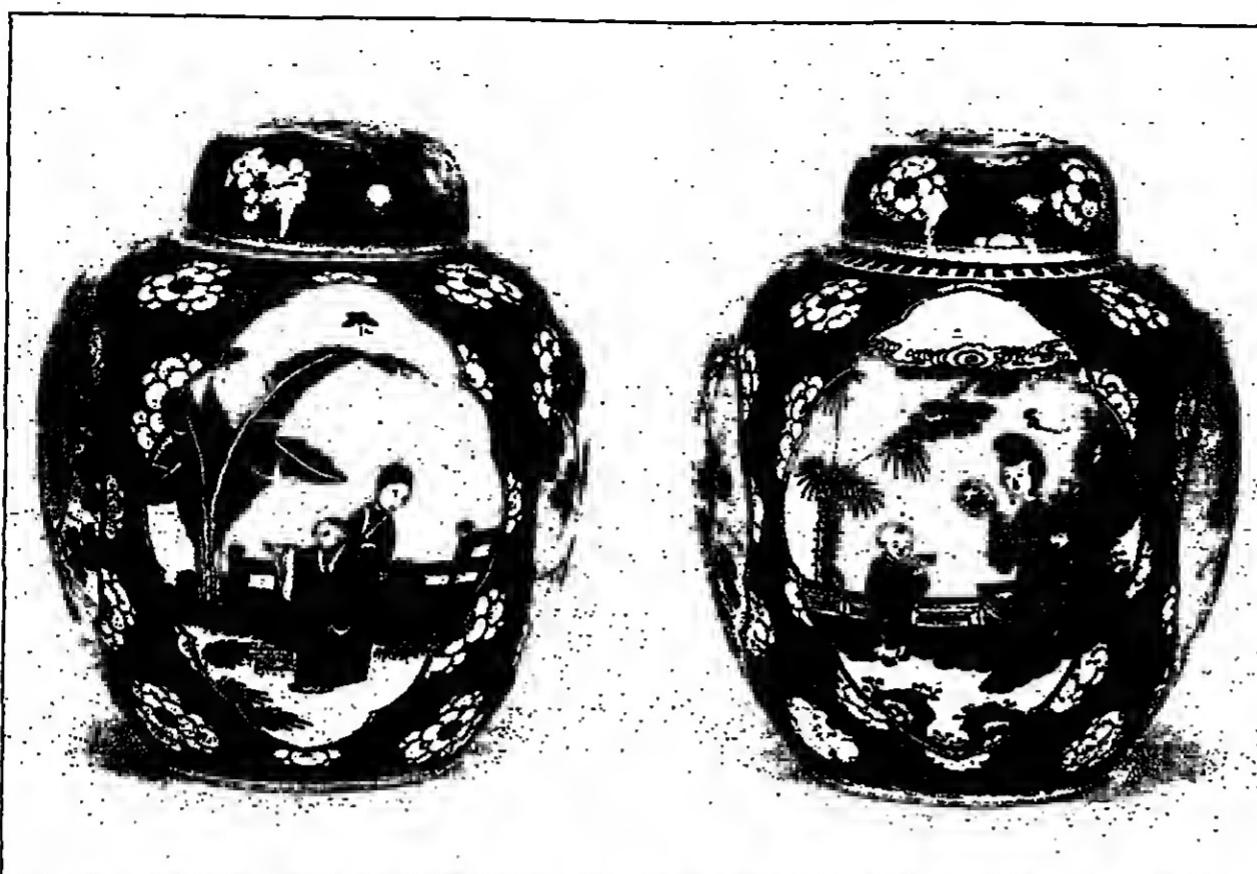
Answer: about the same. Increasing demand for British blue and white china is pushing prices steadily upwards, leaving the real thing undervalued. Both are worth investing in.

Even boring old transfer-printed willow pattern, the pastiche Chinoiserie said to have been dreamed up by Thomas Minton, is rising in price. Big willow-pattern meat serving dishes dating from Minton's lifetime (he died in 1836) that might have sold for £60-£80 five years ago, now fetch £100-£150.

The British love affair with blue and white china has blown hot and cold over the past four centuries. It is now being rekindled. In the 16th century, rare blue and white Chinese imports were mounted in silver gilt by aristocrats and royalty, partly because the cobalt blue pigment was thought to be a mixture of alabaster and sapphire.

Output had increased and prices had dropped to affordable middle-class levels by the mid-18th century, when one tea ship, the Prince George, brought back in a single cargo 26,000 cups and saucers, the same number of plates, 200 tea sets and 462 dinner services. At that time, some British-made porcelain was unable to withstand boiling water.

After Meissen and Wedgwood cracked the technology, it was Britain and not China that



The blues: prices for such vases have so far risen slowly. They are estimated to sell for about £400 at Sotheby's

supplied most of the world's blue and white. After 1815, little was imported from China. And by 1840, no Brit with any taste would invite friends to dine off it. It was given to the servants. By the turn of the century, even the poor were fed up with it.

But in the course of the decline there had been a brief but ardent revival - the "Chinamania" craze - from the 1870s, coinciding with the orientalism of the Aesthetic Movement. Chinoiserie pieces were stacked with blue and white Chinese vases, much of it supplied by the London shop Liberty..

Pairs of those vases are still relatively cheap - but are unlikely to remain so for long. They are the interior designer's post-minimalist dream.

At Sotheby's Billingshurst saleroom last month a 14in tall pair of blue and white Chinese vases of about 1880 sold for £400 (including 15 per cent buyer's premium), well within the esti-

mate of £300-£500. The pair shown here, 11.5in tall (one cover cracked), are of similar date and carry the same estimate in the 17 June sale (10.30am). Prices for such wares have so far risen gradually - four years ago, the estimates might have been only £100 lower.

Bigger price rises are occurring in blue and white transfer-printed wares, for which the 300 members of Friends of Blue are enthusiastic bidders. Members published research, including a two-volume dictionary, sourcing print patterns and makers' marks, has boosted values, especially for interesting patterns and unusual shapes such as ladies' shoes. Examples from Britain's years of peak production, 1795-1840, are becoming highly collectable.

Prices for some choice printed pieces have practically doubled in four or five years. In the 17 June sale, a 19th century Spode meat plate, with an un-

usual design showing hunters on an elephant shooting at a leopard in a tree, is estimated £450-£600. A similar piece, estimated £200-£300 five years ago, fetched £540.

The really big prices for British blue and white are for British-painted Delftware, brought to this country in the mid-17th century by Dutch potters who put tin oxide in the lead glaze to add whiteness. A British Delftware dish, hand-painted with a cat playing a fiddle and dancing mice, fetched £74,750 at Sotheby's London last year. A Bristol Delftware blue and white dish of about 1760, estimated £250-£350 in the 17 June Billingshurst sale, would probably have fetched only £150 four years ago.

Prices will continue to rise as more collectors, both here and abroad, are attracted into this increasingly well-researched field. The United States already has a Blue Willow Society.

The Friends of Blue's 25th anniversary is being marked by an exhibition of transfer-printed pottery at the Wedgwood Visitor Centre (01782-204218) in Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, until 12 July. "True Blue" by Gaye Blake Roberts contains an illustrated catalogue of the exhibition. It is £11.50 (plus £1.95 p&p) from The Secretary, Friends of Blue, PO Box 122, Didcot O.D., OX11 0YH.

Sotheby's Summers Place, Billinghurst, West Sussex RH14 9AD (01403-833534). Christie's South Kensington sale of oriental ceramics, Thursday, 10.30am (0171-581 7611).

Dictionary of Blue and White Printed Pottery 1780-1880 by AW Poynter and RK Henrywood is available from the Antique Collectors' Club, 5 Church Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP2 1DS. Volume I £29.95, vol II £25, plus £3 p&p for one or both. (01394-385501).

LOOSE CHANGE

Henderson Investors is offering a discount of 2 per cent on lump-sum investments into its Global Technology Fund, a unit trust which invests in both computer and medical technology. Minimum investment is £1,000. Call 0800 212256.

Axa Sun Life is launching an ethical investment unit trust. The company says its product not only will operate on the basis of strict ethical criteria, its risk profile will also be lower than usual for such investments. Until 22 May, investors will be offered a discount of 2 per cent on the initial charge or an extra 1 per cent extra allocation to the investment in the fund. Call 0171 6067788.

TSB is launching a new issue of its six-year Guaranteed Stock-market Bond, with growth linked to the FTSE 100 share index. The bond offers a cash-back guarantee should share prices fall. Gains paid out will come from the average of the FTSE 100 in the final 12 months of the bond's life. Exposure of invested capital to growth is 94

per cent, with the maximum increase payable limited to 80 per cent. Call 0500 758444.

Citibank International is relaxing the criteria for customers wishing to open an account to anyone with a household income of £30,000, provided they pay their salaries into their account. The scheme is designed to attract couples. Call Alyson West on 0171 500 3225.

The GM credit card, from Vauxhall, is offering its cardholders an extra 500 bonus points - equivalent to £500 - if they buy a Vauxhall car with their existing rebate points up to 30 September 1998. Cardholder redemption maximums of 2,500 points still apply.

Premier Portfolio Managers is launching a UK Smaller Companies fund, targeting companies with a market capitalisation of £50m to £450m. Up to 20 per cent of the fund may also be invested in companies not matching those criteria, including AIM-listed firms. Premier is offering a 1 per cent discount

off its usual 5.5 per cent initial charge until 1 June. Call 0800 212577.

Legal & General is launching a new Mortgage Protection Plan, an accident sickness and unemployment cover which combines 30-day triggers when

redundancy strikes with longer deferment options for sickness benefits. An existing borrower who is seeking disability cover to apply after 180 days and unemployment cover after 30 days, would be £5.75 a month for every £100 of cover sought. Call 01737 5286259.

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INTERNET INVESTOR

**Hi-tech stocks
cannot net
such large
gains for
much longer**

ROBIN AMLOT

Few analysts would disagree that what has been happening on Wall Street over the course of the past few months is a classic stock market bubble. The only argument is over how loudly it will pop when the Federal Reserve, the central bank, does eventually put up US interest rates. However, there is an interesting side show to the main market action, which is taking place in the hi-techs as they are known.

Specifically, the action is in Internet stocks rather than general software or hardware, where both the respective industry leaders, Microsoft and Intel, are slugging it out with various state and Federal authorities over alleged monopolistic behaviour.

Very little money is actually being made out of the Internet. In fact, only five out of the top 25 most valuable Internet companies are actually profit-making. However, that embarrassing little fact has not stopped the shares of the leading internet companies from soaring.

America OnLine (AOL), which also owns CompuServe, has 12 million paying members and has seen its market capitalisation peak at more than a billion dollars for every million members. Yahoo!, Excite, Lycos and Infoseek are the four most popular US-based internet "search engines". These companies, whose free services allow us as individual surfers to search for what we want on the net, have seen their combined market capitalisation rise almost equal to that of AOL.

Even a service which is little more than a sophisticated online board recently changed hands for \$33m (£20m). Silicon Investor calls itself the "controversial home of individual investors". These individuals the US website describes as sophisticated people who invest their own money for themselves.

The site claims to have many US technology company directors among its 100,000 members who swap investment tips and research, posting their messages on the site after paying a \$125 life membership fee.

You also get search tools, which allow you to view all the messages which

are posted on the site.

Imagine at the turn of the last century somebody had offered you a glimpse of how important the car was going to be in the 20th century and then offered you the chance to invest in automobile stocks. Mind you, with my luck I would probably have gone for the company making square wheels (to stop the car rolling back down hill). The trick with investing in Internet stocks for the 21st century is to make sure that we avoid the "square wheel".

Silicon Investor: www.techstocks.com

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**BRIAN
TORA**

Fear is driving the bulls

Taking a break from the business of markets should provide the chance to distance yourself from events and gain a little perspective on business affairs. In practice, any perspective is usually eroded by the acres of required reading as you endeavour to catch up with a fortnight's worth of financial news.

Their methodology is simple. By dividing the number of bulls by the sum of the total bulls and bears, they reach a percentage figure which gives a contrarian indicator for the market. A high percentage bull rate is an indication that a market top is about to be reached. Low, and you could be seeing a bottom.

One of my colleagues has used this system to great effect in keeping us all committed to the US despite widespread concern over the pace of the rise. The Index is now encouraging him to change his view. Suddenly, the bulls are all in the ascendancy – and it all coincides with continuing strength in the market. He now believes (as indeed the indicator suggests) the next move in prices has to be down.

Sellers were not much in evidence when shares took a tumble on the back of speculation over a rate rise from the Fed. We may have lost 100 points-plus here in London, but the real business came when bargain-hunters emerged to pick among the debris of a crab day's dealing.

The fear is evident from the way in which professional managers are clearly worried about being out of the market. Two years and 40 per cent ago, some leading managers were pointing to an alarming rise in valuation levels. A number felt a correction was due and raised cash in anticipation of a setback that never happened. The underperformance of these leading managers is now a matter of record. Being left behind again is not an option.

It helps perpetuate a rather unhealthy scenario. Since 1963, Paine Webber, in the US, has published a graph of professional investors' sentiment. Known as the Bulls and Bears Sentiment, it classifies the opinions expressed in more than 140 market

newsletters, produced by independent non-broking organisations, as bullish, bearish and correction. Correction consists of those investors who maybe nervous in the short term, but remain optimistic in the long run.

Their methodology is simple. By dividing the number of bulls by the sum of the total bulls and bears, they reach a percentage figure which gives a contrarian indicator for the market. A high percentage bull rate is an indication that a market top is about to be reached. Low, and you could be seeing a bottom.

If my colleague is right then it is no good trying to be clever about UK shares. We have seen how much the US and UK have been able to withstand the bearish sentiment that has arisen in the Far East. Whether we could hold out against bearish sentiment in the US is another matter entirely. US shares are worth more than three-times the value of all the Far Eastern stock markets put together.

So a correction looks to be on the cards. It all depends on the extent of any setback, but the nice warm relaxed feeling that remains with me from my holiday is not to be translated into buying frenzy, at least for the time being.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee.

A = Minimum age 22 yrs. Holders of comprehensive home insurance policy or landlord's existing customers. APR = Annualised percentage rate. ASU = Accident, sickness and unemployment insurance. B+C = Buildings and contents insurance. H = Home insurance rate applies if insurance not arranged. LTD = Life insurance. MIP = Mortgage indemnity premium. N = Introductory rate for a limited period. U = Unemployment insurance.

* If completion is before 30/4/98. All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01682 500577 1 May 1998

Source: MONEYFACTS, MONEYFACTS results 1 May 1998

BEST BORROWING RATES

| Telephone | % Rate and period | Max. fee | Notice | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|--------------------|------------|--------------------|---------|
| MORTGAGES | | | | | | |
| Scarborough BS | 0890 133749 | 0.95% for 1 year | 925 | | | |
| First Mortgage | 0890 000088 | 5.49% to 30.61% | 755 | | | |
| Northern Rock | 0845 005 0500 | 0.19% to 1.03% | 925 | | | |
| | | No MPF for adv up to 97% | 225 | | | |
| | | No MPF for adv up to 97% | 225 | | | |
| VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES | | | | | | |
| Scarborough BS | 0890 133749 | 1.55% for 1 year | 80% | | | |
| First Mortgage | 0890 000088 | 4.44% to 30.00% | 75% | | | |
| Northern Rock | 0845 005 0500 | 0.85% to 1.01% | 85% | | | |
| | | Interest only | — | | | |
| FIRST TIME BUYER FIXED RATES | | | | | | |
| Northern Rock | 0845 005 0500 | 3.85% to 7.00% | 97% | | | |
| Hallmark | 0890 101110 | 5.75% to 31.01% | 90% | | | |
| Nationwide BS | 0890 302010 | 0.19% for 5 years | 925 | | | |
| | | No high lending fee (MPF) | 225 | | | |
| | | No high lending fee | 225 | | | |
| FIRST TIME BUYER VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES | | | | | | |
| Staffordshire | 01822 317485 | 5.25% to 12.50% | 925 | | | |
| First Mortgage | 0890 000088 | 5.55% to 30.01% | 97% | | | |
| Northern Rock | 0845 005 0500 | 0.85% to 1.01% | 85% | | | |
| | | Interest only | — | | | |
| UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS | | | | | | |
| Telephone | APR % | Fixed monthly payments on £1K over 3 yrs | | | | |
| INSURED | | | | | | |
| | | With insurance | Without insurance | | | |
| Northern Rock | 0845 421421 | 9.9% H | £165.13 | | | |
| Yorkshire BS | 0890 202122 | 12.5% | £160.33 | | | |
| Direct Line | 0181 601 0005 | 12.9% A | £162.75 | | | |
| | | £165.38 | — | | | |
| SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE) | | | | | | |
| Telephone | APR % | Max LTV Advance | Term | | | |
| Clydebank | 0800 240024 | 9.7% | 70% | | | |
| Royal Bank of Scotland | 0800 121121 | 10.7% | 70% | | | |
| First Direct | 0345 1001003 | 11.25% | 80% | | | |
| | | £25K to £10K | 3 years to return* | | | |
| | | Up to 40 years | Up to 40 years | | | |
| OVERDRAFTS | | | | | | |
| Telephone | Account | Authorised | Unauthorised | | | |
| | | % p.a. | APR % | | | |
| Alliance & Leicester | 0890 999585 | Alliance | 0.95% | 12.00% | 2.20% | 29.9% |
| Bank of Scotland Direct | 0800 004004 | Direct charge | — | 11.0% | — | 25.0% |
| Nationwide BS | 0890 302010 | Repayment | 0.97% | 12.2% | 2.10% | 28.3% |
| CREDIT CARDS | | | | | | |
| Telephone | Card Type | Rate % p.a. | APR % | Annual fee | Fee paid on income | |
| Capital One Bank | 0890 669000 | Visa | 0.5850% | 6.0050% | NB | 54 days |
| RBS Adverts | 0890 077770 | Visa | 0.6450% | 7.2050% | NB | 55 days |
| Co-operative Bank | 0890 100000 | Advantage Visa | 0.6500% | 7.0050% | NB | 0 days |
| GOLD CARDS | | | | | | |
| Capital One Bank | 0890 669000 | Visa | 0.5850% | 6.0050% | NB | 54 days |
| RBS Adverts | 0890 077770 | Bank Rate Visa | 0.6500% | 7.2050% | NB | 60 days |
| Co-operative Bank | 0890 100000 | Visa | 0.6500% | 7.0050% | NB | 55 days |
| STORE CARDS | | | | | | |
| Telephone | Payment by direct debit | Payment by other methods | | | | |
| | % p.m. | % APR | | | | |
| John Lewis | Visa store | 1.28% | 18.0% | | | |
| BS | Visa store | 1.95% | 20.0% | | | |
| Marks & Spencer | 01244 881681 | 1.97% | 26.3% | | | |
| | | 2.07% | 27.8% | | | |
| <small>A = Minimum age 22 yrs. Holders of comprehensive home insurance policy or landlord's existing customers. APR = Annualised percentage rate. ASU = Accident, sickness and unemployment insurance. B+C = Buildings and contents insurance. H = Home insurance rate applies if insurance not arranged. LTD = Life insurance. MIP = Mortgage indemnity premium. N = Introductory rate for a limited period. U = Unemployment insurance.</small> | | | | | | |
| <small>* If completion is before 30/4/98. All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01682 500577 1 May 1998</small> | | | | | | |
| <small>Source: MONEYFACTS, MONEYFACTS results 1 May 1998</small> | | | | | | |

BEST SAVINGS RATES

| Telephone number | Account | Notice or term | Deposit | Rate % |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--------|
| INSTANT ACCESS | | | | |
| Clydebank Bank | 0800 442626 | Savings | Instant | 1.7% |
| Woodlark | 0800 222200 | Card Saver | Instant | 2.0% |
| Steed & Sheldan BS | 0845 413553 | Branch instant | Instant | 2.0% |
| Lewis & Hobbs BS | 0845 222107 | Premier Access | Instant | 2.0% |
| INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS | | | | |
| Standard Life Bank | 0845 955667 | Direct Access | Instant (7) | 2.1% |
| Scotian Widows Bank | 0845 845 0829 | Instant Access | Instant (8) | 2.0% |
| Saveway | 0800 555565 | Direct Savings | Instant (9) | 2.0% |
| Northern Rock | 0845 601 0717 | Bank Plus | Instant (10) | 2.0% |
| NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS | | | | |
| Scarborough BS | 01723 500016 | Scarborough 30 | 30 Day | 2.0% |
| | | Scarborough 30 | 60 Day (8) | 2.0% |
| | | Scarborough 30 | 60 Day (7) | 2.0% |
| | | Scarborough 30 | 1 Year | 2.0% |
| CHEQUE ACCOUNTS | | | | |
| Investec Bank (UK) | 0171 203 1650 | HDI 5000 | Instant | 25.00% |
| | | Asset Reserve | Instant | 21.00% |
| | | Classic Post | Instant | 21.00% |
| | | Invested Access | Instant | 21.00% |
| FIXED RATE BONDS | | | | |
| Scarborough BS | 01723 572222 | Fixed Rate Bond | 8 Month | 5.00% |
| | | Fixed Rate Bond | 10.3.99 | 5.00% |
| | | Branch Fixed Rate Bond 1 Year | 5.00% | 5.00% |
| | | Fixed Rate Bond | 7.00% | 5.00% |
| FIRST TESSAS | | | | |
| Norwich & Peterborough | 01753 972222 | 5 Year | £100 | 6.00% |
| Broadland & Bury BS | 0800 592265 | 5 Year | £200 | 6.00% |
| Denbigh BS | 01325 393655 | 5 Year | £1,000 | 6.00% |
| Sun Banking Corp | 01493 744505 | 5 Year | £1,000 | 6.00% |
| FOLLOW-ON TESSAS | | | | |
| Broadland & Bury BS | 01753 972222 | Preference TESSA | 5 Year | £3,000 |

Follow the sage and invest in another hobby



THE
JONATHAN
DAVIS
COLUMN

When Warren Buffett cannot find the stock opportunities he wants to invest in it could be time to think seriously about sitting out the rest of this bull market.

This is the bad news for anyone who still wants to believe that the current bull market will go on for ever. Warren Buffett is playing a lot more bridge than he was.

By his own admission, this is not something the modern world's most accomplished stock market investor would be doing if share prices were not now so high. The chairman of Berkshire Hathaway confided to stockholders at his annual meeting this week that he is putting

in around 10 hours a week into his bridge, either at the card table or (his new hobby) on the internet. His long-standing partner - Charlie Munger - is also, I can reveal, playing a good deal of golf.

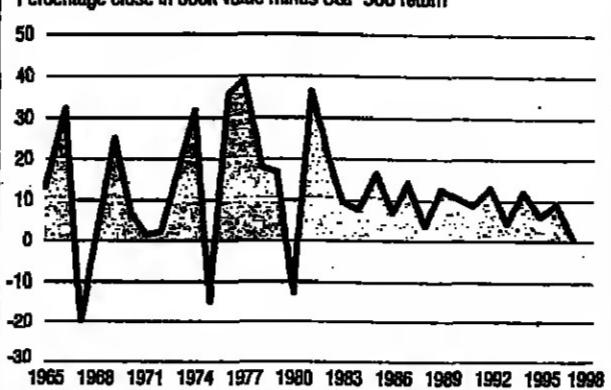
Well, you may ask, so what? At 67, Mr Buffett is now past conventional retirement age while his chum Mr Munger, at 73, is even older. Why shouldn't they be having a hit of fun, as long as the shareholders are happy with it - which, judging

by the ecstatic scenes at the annual meeting of Mr Buffett's company Berkshire Hathaway this week, they certainly are?

I can vouch for the fact that the annual gathering of the Buffett fans in his home town of Omaha, Nebraska, while always unconventional, has now become more of a pilgrimage than a shareholders' meeting. This year, more than 10,000 shareholders flew in from all round the world to watch a video and pay homage to the man who is routinely - and not without reason - described as the greatest stock market investor of the postwar period.

So great was the clamour to get a good seat in the sports stadium where the meeting was held that the first investor started queuing at 4.15am. By the time they opened the doors at 7am, the line of shareholders stretched more than a quarter of a mile around the vast car park. Mr Buffett himself was followed everywhere he went by a camera crew and treated more like a basketball star than the chairman of a large and successful diversified holding

Buffett's edge over the market
Percentage close in book value minus S&P 500 return



company - which is what, strictly speaking, he is.

The hoopla and ceremonial attending Mr Buffett's every doing has increased dramatically in the last two years and speaks volumes for the current state of popular enthusiasm for the stock market in the States, which is infectious but not without its disturbing aspects. (If you believe one recent survey, no fewer than 20 per cent of the vast new army of first-time mutual fund investors believe that returns from shares are guaranteed by the Federal Government.)

It is difficult to recall, visiting the States now, that it was only seven years ago, during its last recession, that the nation was in the throes of a crisis of confidence over what many saw as the impending Japanese takeover of their economy.

Mr Buffett himself is not joining in the general bull market euphoria. When quizzed, he sticks to a carefully worded formula about the level of the markets. Current market levels, he says, can be justified if two conditions continue to be met. One is that long-term interest

rates remain at or below their current level (6 per cent for the long-bond yield). The second is that Corporate America continues to earn the unprecedented returns on equity it has experienced over the past five years. How realistic are those conditions, in Buffett's view? Answer: not very. "Two big ifs" is what he called them this week.

Interest rates certainly don't seem to be his concern. He would not have bought \$6bn of long-dated Treasury bonds last week if he thought bond yields were seriously about to rise. That investment is a geared bet that interest rates will fall rather than rise. It is the second condition which worries Mr Buffett and his long-time partner Mr Munger more.

They have profited handsomely from the revival in US corporate profits in recent years, and the rise in the price that the market will pay for those profits. Mr Buffett's trademark holdings in consumer companies with strong franchises have soared in value. His investment in Coca-Cola

alone is now worth the best part of \$15bn.

But can the record level of profitability last? Short term, it is not impossible. A wise old bird like Mr Buffett also knows that bull markets have a life of their own in their later stages, and publicly he is not going to risk his hard-earned reputation for omniscience by trying to call the next downturn. But the odds against profits staying at current levels are quite long. As Mr Munger pointed out this week, returns on equity of 20 per cent per annum are 50 per cent above their long-run average. He and Mr Buffett think there is no margin of safety in current price levels, and are starting to act accordingly.

Last year Berkshire Hathaway started to trim its equity positions, albeit modestly, in favour of bonds and some more exotic investments, such as silver. Having made his name as a patient long-term accumulator of shares, for the past two years Mr Buffett has actually been a net seller of equities - a striking reversal of previous trends. His close mate Mr Munger

seemed to hint at one point that Mr Buffett's decision to dabble in the silver market owed as much to boredom as anything else. There is another way of looking at this, however. On the face of it, the so-called Sage of Omaha has had two quite outstanding years: +43 per cent in 1996 and +34 per cent in 1997. That, however, is only fractionally better than the US stock market as a whole over the same period. In relative terms, Mr Buffett's performance, as my chart shows, is nothing like as effortlessly superior as it once was.

That is hardly his fault: the amount of money he has to invest is now vast and the range of available opportunities is shrinking. The truth is that he needs more testing climate in which to demonstrate his superior investment skills and a roaring bull market like the one we have had for the last couple of years is not an easy environment in which to sparkle. He is happy to sit back and enjoy his bridge while the hull thunders on, but he is certainly not in the retiring mood, just waiting for more profitable opportunities.

MONEY & ETHICS

Take a principled position in stocks

Eliminate the negative, accentuate the positive and you can meet both your ethical and your financial concerns. Iain Morse explains

local authorities managing funds on ethical guidelines is also significant: charities alone invest over £10bn this way. A growing number of local authority pension schemes also "screen" potential investments according to ethical criteria.

Tessa Tenant, head of research at NPI's Global Care Fund, thinks: "Ethical investment is becoming mainstream, no longer seen as cranky, or bad for your pocket."

Acting against environmental principles can cost companies and investors in them very dear, as Richard Singleton, a fund manager at Stewardship, points out: "Take pollution. Messy industries are now having to clean up after themselves, in many cases decades after they made money from a polluting process."

"There is long-term benefit both in environmental terms and for shareholders if a company can anticipate future regulatory changes on matters like pollution and build these into current operations. This may cost a little more now, but saves money later."

But how do we assess the ethical standards of a company? The Ethical Investment and Research Service (Eiris), a charity which surveys more than 1,100 UK companies and Europe's largest 500 companies, measures their business activities against a wide range of ethical criteria. Providing an investment selection service both to private investors and fund managers, Eiris has come up with a combination of both "negative" and "positive" criteria to determine how companies make the grade.

Karen Eldridge, who works at Eiris, explains: "There's no exact definition of an ethical fund, except that ethical considerations

influence investment choice. Negative criteria amount to the avoidance of companies whose activities compromise the investor's ethical concerns. Positive criteria depend on identifying specific business activities which an investor wishes to support."

The positive and negative criteria used by Eiris serve as a benchmark for ethical fund managers and are widely used to provide investment screening.

But according to Mr Singleton at Friends Provident: "Screening can hide companies with good intentions, simply because they are currently caught up in disapproved activities. Again, pollution is a case in point. Very few of the companies we invest in can claim to leave no pollution."

"The point is to find a management team who admit they have a problem but want to sort it out. By offering our support, we give them a positive reason to do so."

He points to one of Stewardship's current investments - the Go-Ahead Group, as a case in point. Operating both bus and train services, the company is committed to buying a new generation of urban buses which have fewer gas emissions. "This will cost more now but, in five or 10 years, I would expect them to be a preferred supplier of bus services in some inner cities," thinks Mr Singleton.

Examples like this underline the way that ethical funds can differ. Some rely on "screening" both to avoid and select given shares, others have in-house research teams and take a more active approach to reforming the way companies work.

One of the first steps in making ethical investments is to decide which set of business

activities you wish to avoid and which you want to invest into. Doing some homework will help you find the fund that most closely matches your ethical concerns.

Eiris's reference guide *Money & Ethics* assesses the main ethical funds in terms of both positive and negative criteria. But ethical providers will also supply free copies of their annual reports and prospectuses, which should detail both their investment philosophy and specific share holdings.

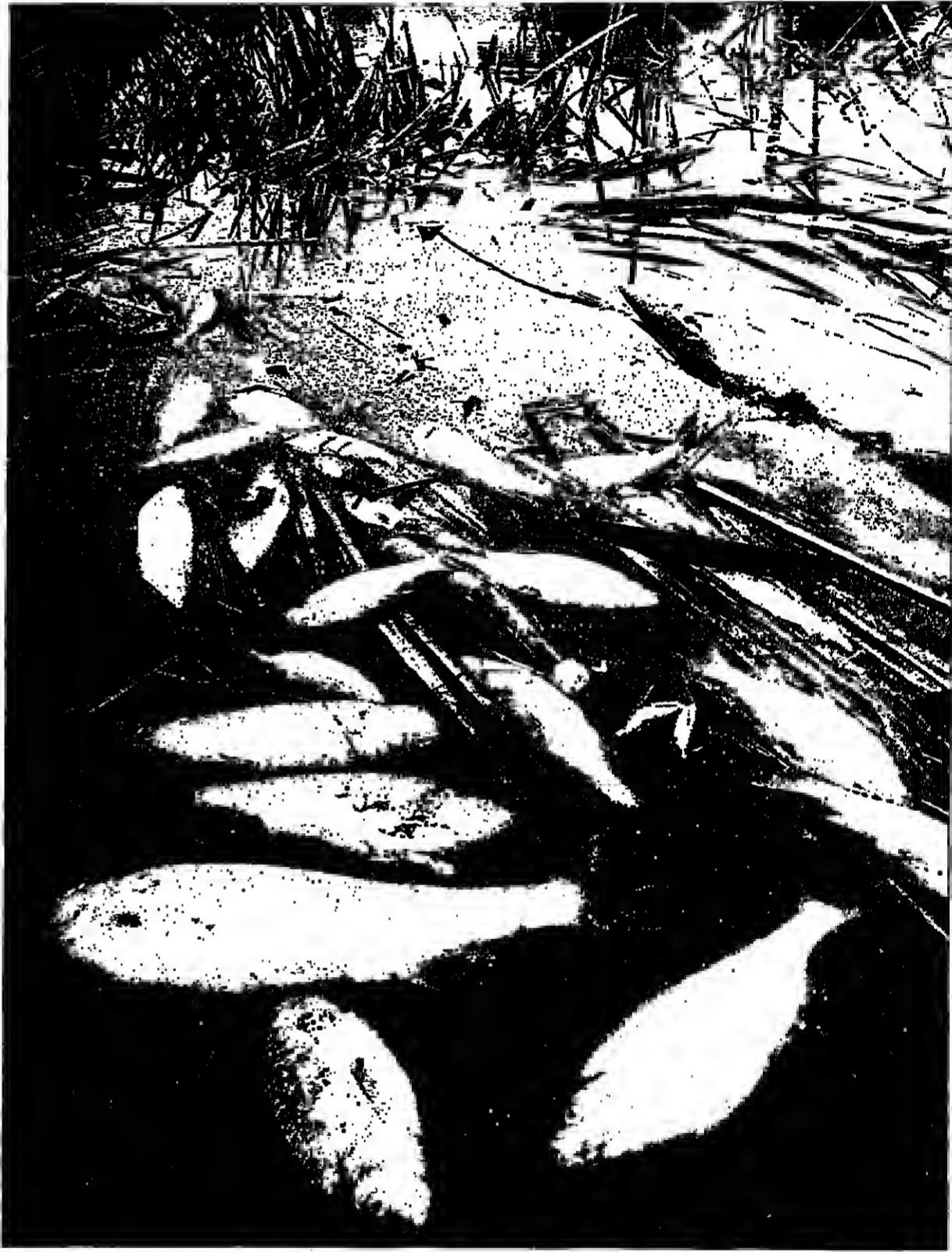
To order copies of *'Money & Ethics'*, contact Eiris on 0171-735 1351.

'The Independent' has produced a free, 28-page *'Guide to Ethical Finances'*, written by Nic Cicutta, the paper's personal finance editor, and sponsored by Friends Provident.

Call 0800 214487 or fill in the coupon on page 4.

What funds avoid:
Alcohol
Animal testing
Gambling
Greenhouse gases
Health and safety breaches
Human rights abuses
Intensive farming
Military involvement, MoD contracts
Nuclear power
Ozone depletion
Pesticides
Pornography
Roads and transport policy
Third World concerns
Tobacco
Tropical hardwood
Water pollution

What funds support:
Community involvement
Disclosure
Environmental initiatives
Equal Opportunities
Positive products and services



Downstream profits: Most ethical funds avoid serious polluters but some seek out firms with 'green' potential

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Adopt a policy of no surrender

Between 50,000 and 60,000 investors who sell their with-profits plans back to insurers early do better on the TEP market. But life offices seem reluctant to advise their customers of this.

Nic Cicutti reports

Market-makers in traded endowment policies (TEPs) want life assurance companies to tell customers about the existence of the second-hand endowment market.

They say that people who surrender their policies early, rather than waiting for them to mature, might easily do better by selling them on to a new owner. According to Christopher Dobie of Beale Dobie, a policy market-maker, prices on the second-hand market are, on average, 15 per cent higher than the often pitiful surrender values offered by life companies.

For people who buy the policies, the average rate of return is 10 per cent a year, using 1997 maturity values as a guide. But few companies alert policyholders to the existence of the market. Only two - Norwich

Union and Clerical Medical - routinely inform all policyholders wishing to surrender policies of the TEP alternative, says Tim Villiers, director of the Association of Policy Market Makers (APMM).

Clerical Medical includes the APMM's telephone number in the literature sent to surrendering policyholders; Norwich Union sends the association's brochure, which lists policy market-makers and details the types of policies in which they deal.

Other companies will sometimes reveal the information on a pot-luck basis - depending on which person deals with the surrender request, or make vague reference to the existence of the market in the small print.

Some, notably Standard Life, are wary of TEPs and will only acknowledge their existence to people who specifically ask for information. "We have some concerns about this market," says Andrew Black, marketing manager. "It's not really an issue for the seller, who may

indeed get a good price. But there is evidence that people who buy them are paying quite considerable premiums to their real value."

Mr Black concedes that this may be partly due to the perceived additional appeal of policies from mutual insurers - of which Standard Life is the largest - to carpetbaggers ("although people who say we're a likely candidate for conversion don't know what they're talking about").

But the main cause for concern is that second-hand prices relate to

past payouts, rather than reflecting the likelihood of lower payouts in the future, Mr Black says.

"This depends on where you think the responsibility lies," counters Mr Villiers. "If the payout is less than the asset-backing of the policy, does the moral duty of the life office lie with the original policyholder? The most common reason for them deciding to sell is because they need the cash. The companies should make sure they get as much as possible."

Mr Villiers also dismisses Mr Black's claim that the policies are too expensive. "They get a jolly good return, especially considering it is such a safe investment."

Policies suitable for sale on the second-hand market should be at least five years old and have a surrender value of at least £1,000.

According to Mr Dobie, the value of traded policies has jumped from £5m to about £25m over the eight years since Beale Dobie entered the business. But research by his partner,

David Beale, indicates that as much as £800m-worth of the policies offered for surrender each year would do better on the second-hand market.

This means that between 50,000 and 60,000 of the people surrendering direct to insurers would do better in sell to new policyholders, he says. "But most people surrendering aren't financially acute. About 85 per cent of all endowment policies are sold to support a mortgage and they are often their holders' only investment."

"The only solution we can see is for the companies to tell them. Every life office knows whether they would do better on the traded endowment market, but they don't say so. We've been saying in life offices for ages - at least two years - 'Come on chaps, why not tell people?' But, far too many do absolutely nothing."

"We've obviously got a vested interest in keeping the policy going," says Liz Watson of Norwich Union. "But we are also keen to look after the interests of all policyholders, including those wishing to surrender."

The Association of British Insurers gives information about the second-hand market in its free leaflet on surrender values, but says individual life companies must make up their own minds.

The Association of Policy Market Makers: 0171-739 3949; Beale Dobie: 01621 851133; ABI: 0171-600 3333. This article first appeared in 'Bloomberg Money' magazine.



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Home truths about mortgage options

Can endowment mortgages compare with repayment schemes which guarantee to pay off loans, or PEP/ISA plans that can offer investors tax advantages?

£9,821 would be repaid after seven years and £17,055 after 10 years. If a person wanted to move to a new home at the same price, their next mortgage would take that repayment into account. Indeed, the rest of the loan would be paid off in just the same amount of time, with the same monthly payments as before.

While monthly repayments might have to rise if a larger mortgage is taken out, the same would apply with "portable" endowments: monthly premiums would go up. What is more, policyholders would usually be forced to start a new policy, paying a fresh set of initial charges, which suck a large proportion of premiums out of endowments in early years.

Mr Cartwright says: "I have always been sceptical of the so-called portability argument in favour of endowments. Repayment mortgages can be used flexibly and can be more effective than endowments in the early years."

However, defenders of endowment-linked mortgages point out that they have the potential not only to pay off a loan but also to leave borrowers with a lump sum to enjoy at maturity. Nor are combined payments that dissimilar to straight repayment loans.

Amanda Davidson, at

Holden Meehan, calculates that a 25-year repayment loan of £100,000, at an 8.7 per cent interest rate, would involve net monthly premiums of £795.77 a month, plus a further £14.76 a month in life insurance, a total of about £810.53. By contrast, an interest-only loan would cost £692.38 which, when added to an endowment of £164, would cost £886 a month.

Ms Davidson says: "You do pay more with an endowment. But as interest rates fall, costs begin to even out so that when rates are about 7.5 per cent, the cost of an endowment loan is roughly the same as a repayment one."

The difference lies in potential returns. With a repayment loan, you are guaranteed to pay off the loan and no more. With an endowment, the minimum guaranteed amount might be just £52,200. However, if investments grow at just 5 per cent a year, the amount paid out would be £82,900.

If investments grow at 7.5 per cent, returns would reach £117,000. With growth of 10 per cent a year, returns would be £168,000. For the original £100,000 loan to be paid back, returns would have to average 6.3 per cent. Ms Davidson says: "It is not too unrealistic to assume growth on this scale."

Are endowments still a worthwhile investment in the age of personal equity plans (PEPs) and new-style Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs)? Ms Davidson calculates that, assuming a 9 per cent growth rate, to pay off the same loan would require monthly payments of £143 into a PEP/ISA, including life cover. This would raise the total cost of monthly mortgage payments to £335, less than an endowment. Moreover, returns on PEPs and ISAs are not subject to taxation on the underlying life fund, unlike endowments. They are, however, more risky.

- Nic Cicutti

Traditional life policy bonuses

| Company | Annual bonuses | | | Terminal bonuses | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|
| | bonus on sum assured | 1995% | 1996% | 1997% | 1997% | 1996% |
| Commissioners | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| Clerical Medical | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| Equity Protection | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| GA Life | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3.25 | 6.25 | 6.75 | 6.75 |
| Guaranteed Value | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| Scottish Friendly (tax-free) | 4.00 | - | - | 7.00 | - | - |
| Scottish Friendly | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| Scottish Life (tax-free) | 2.25 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| Standard Life | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| Scottish Natural | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.25 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.50 |
| Scottish Protection | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| Scottish Widows | 2.00 | 2.25 | 2.50 | 4.00 | 4.50 | 5.00 |
| Standard Life | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 6.00 | 6.50 | 6.50 |
| Tontine Life PEP (tax-free) | 2.50 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 6.00 | 6.50 | 6.50 |
| Tontine Life PEP | 2.50 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.75 |
| Average | 2.50 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.75 |

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| Address | Postcode |
| Date of birth | Tel. No. Home |
| Tel. No. Work | |

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3 denotes a fund available through a Manager's PEP scheme.

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Estate of the art

Road test Audi A6 Avant quattro, by Roger Bell

The perfect car? There's no such thing. One set of wheels cannot embrace all the incompatible attributes of, say, a classic Ferrari, a Transit van, a Rolls-Royce Seraph, a Caterham Seven, a Mini Cooper and a Land Rover – a fleet to satisfy most whims.

The perfect compromise, then? Now that's easier. A diluted mélange of the petrolhead's dream team is not so far-fetched. If you seek a car that's all things to all (well-heeled) people – a car more than passably endowed with comfort, refinement, exclusivity, fun, space, practicality, agility and freedom – look no further than Audi's mid-sized, V6-powered, four-wheel drive A6 estate, officially known as the 2.8 Avant quattro.

Subtle changes in form and line have turned the latest A6 estate from a good-looking car into a stunning one. Few coupes are more glamorous. While

high style was a design priority, it's been achieved by sacrificing much space. There are roomier luxury estates, but anything that can compete as a cargo carrier with Volvo's V70, even a C-class Merc, is not going to frustrate the heavy packer.

The Avant has a simple seat-fold arrangement that doesn't tax your strength or dexterity, and there's plenty of thoughtful detailing, including a ski hatch, tie-down eyes, an under-floor recess, a roll-up dog guard, even optional rear-facing seats. Only on rear knee-room is the A6 found lacking.

So much fun practicalities. But how does it drive? If not the quickest of the performance estates, the A6 quattro is

hardly short on pep (speed freaks dismiss with an automobilia rating of 140mph should wait for the faster 230bhp bi-turbo). Power comes from a 2.8-litre V6 engine that drives all four wheels.

Quattro transmission, manual or automatic, doesn't make the Audi a mud-plugging off-roader, but it does enable it to negotiate fields and slippery ascents that might beat ordinary cars. More to the point, 4x4 endows the speedy A6 with ultra-safe traction and handling. Every car has its cornering and braking limits, but nothing short of provocative recklessness is going to breach those of the A6 quattro. For grip, composure and security, this Audi has few peers.

There's more than a soupçon of com-

fort and plush, too. I found the cabin decor attractive, the front seats excellent, the suspension tolerably supple and the quietness impressive. The smooth engine emits no more than a muted hum, and wind whoosh – suppressed by well-sealed doors and windows – is low. In line with Audi's declared aim of taking on the grandees in the luxury sector, build quality is first class.

You will gather that I took a shine to the A6 Avant quattro. It has so much going for it, and so little against, I cannot name a better all-rounder, a more appealing dream-team compromise. Snags? Price for a start, though at £32,000 it undercuts Volvo's faster, roomier V70R AWD. Other than dashboard confusion – between them, the adjacent climate and audio panels account for more than 40 orange focal points – that's about it.

A great car.

Audi 2.8 A6 Avant quattro,
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and aurally uplifting. Fine driver's¹
car marred by drab interior,
boxy styling and thirst for fuel.
Safe, entertaining handling.

GAVIN GREEN

Exterior car styling has improved enormously in the past few years, as manufacturers have started to throw away the traditional tin-box shackles (Ford with the Ka and the upcoming Focus, Audi with the A6, Alfa with the 156).

The upshot is that our roads are now more interesting places. Sadly, interior design from the mass makers is (mostly) still in the dark ages. This could be why, although our roads are studded with perky shapes, motorists still look as glum as ever. After all, if you spend your whole time in a grey-plastic-swathed cabin, sitting on grey polyester seat trim whose only virtue is that it's hard wearing and doesn't fade when you leave it in the Arizona sun, it's hard to feel cheerful.

Car cabins are testament to the corporate cowardice of car bosses. They shy away from offering different cabins, for fear of losing customers. As always, the fear of failure is the biggest single drawback to progress.

Yet there is hope ahead. Volkswagen has extended its new "slush" plastic-moulding process to the latest Golf, on sale now in the UK. The result is a small, relatively inexpensive car with the quality of plastics usually found only in luxury cars. The Golf, in common with all Audis and the latest Passat, has dash plastics with a soft touch and a handsome grain. It instantly makes the cabins of rival small hatchbacks, such as the latest Vauxhall Astra, look cheap.

To encourage really big change, though, one manufacturer has to break ranks and be bold. This is precisely what Mercedes is about to do with its new Smart City coupé, the little two-seater rumour that will hit mainland European streets at the end of the year (assuming people buy it – many industry pundits still have their doubts). Its cabin is bright and cheerful, and it promises to do cabin design what Swatch did to watch design – an appropriate comparison, given that Swatch is the minority partner in the Smart car venture.

Changeable seat coverings are on the agenda. After all, why stick with the same upholstery for the life of the car, when it's so easy to zip off the old and zip on the new? That way, seat trim can be stylish and colourful, never mind that as with your clothes, you may feel like a change every year or two. This also allows much nicer materials to be used – linens and cottons, for instance, which are currently rejected by the motor industry because they're not as hard wearing as synthetic materials.

Looking much further ahead, Lancia unveiled a concept car at last month's Turin Motor Show, which sought to redefine car interiors by making them more like lounge rooms. It has a hugely roomy interior, and most of the space was liberated by ditching the conventional dashboard. Modern dashboards are throwbacks to the days of the horse-drawn carriage, when they protected passengers from splashes of mud.

On cars, they merely provide a cover for ugly wiring and ventilation trunking. They provide no other useful purpose. Modern, electronic instruments can be contained in separate panels around the windscreen; switches are better sited on satellites either side of the steering wheel. Renault is already some way to offering the dashboard-free car. Its latest Espace has a particularly low, almost "dash" (trimmed in fabric, not plastic) that doubles as a large bag-carrier.

Mercedes-Benz has taken the concept a stage further. One of its recent concept cars ditched the steering wheel. You drive by joystick, in the centre console. Apart from appealing to young people, used to computer games, joysticks are considerably less bulky and safer than steering wheels – inherently dangerous things that frequently crush heads and chests in big accidents. Yet the steering wheel is just about the first thing the car designer starts with, when conceiving a new cabin. It is an upshot of always starting with what went before, rather than with what is best.



Emission accomplished, as cars convert to gas

John Prescott suffered a minor mishap when manoeuvring a zero-emission, solar-powered Honda at a meeting of European environment and transport ministers in Chester two weeks ago. But the deputy Prime Minister still had reason to be cheerful: he was also showing off his ministerial Jaguar Sovereign V8, which has been modified to run on environmentally friendly gas.

Tony Blair is also alleged to have opted for gas power on his Chrysler Grand Voyager. Even the Queen is having some of her stable of Rolls-Royce and Daimler cars modified to produce 70 per cent fewer exhaust emissions.

Local authority fleets are starting to switch to gas, too. Humberside police uses 20 converted Protons. In France gas is half the cost of petrol; 15 per cent of vehicles in Holland run on it. So if the great, the good and the EU are going for gas, how about the ordinary motorist?

Glass's Guide points out that, apart from the environmental benefits, there are big financial ones. The November 1996 budget reduced the duty on liquid petroleum gas (LPG) and compressed natural gas (CNG) by 25 per cent and

Thinking of switching to a more environmentally friendly way to run a vehicle? You're not alone, as James Ruppert reports

GAS: PROS AND CONS

Advantages

Reduced fuel bills, lower exhaust emissions (particularly with CNG), longer engine life, lower servicing costs, potential road fund licence discount, facility to use petrol

means that drivers need never run out of gas – the oil-based kind.

Disadvantages

Reduced power output, reduced economy, loss of luggage space, few filling stations, especially for CNG, cost of conversion.

the last budget froze road gas fuel duty at 10.78 per cent, while raising the cost of both petrol and diesel by 6 per cent. At the pumps LPG costs around 39p a litre whereas a litre of unleaded costs 68p.

CNG is largely methane, like the natural gas that is piped into our homes. To fleet users it costs about 43p per litre. In a car it is stored at high pressure in a heavy tank four times the size of an equivalent petrol tank.

At the moment the only new cars available with this system are Volvos. The £22,930 S70 and V70 Bi-Fuels run on both petrol and gas. Overall CNG burns much more cleanly than LPG and also produces considerably less carbon dioxide. However, there are fewer than 20 CNG refuelling points in the UK, and although 60 or so government vehicles have been converted to run on CNG, LPG is the better gas option at present.

Commercial vehicles have been using LPG, which is similar to bottled butane camping gas, since the Seventies; there are more than 120 refuelling sites. Conversion costs for a petrol car average £1,000, half of what it would be for CNG. Also, the 1998 Budget, which of-

fered a £50 road fund licence for "clean" vehicles, could apply to LPG users.

However, the lack of filling stations is a problem, and so is the need for a 85-litre propane tank which in a medium-size car takes up most of the boot space. There are performance penalties, too: engine power drops by up to 10 per cent and fuel consumption rises by a similar amount in older carburettor models.

However, with more modern petrol injection engines the reduction in performance is hardly noticeable, and any penalty in consumption is more than compensated for by the lower price. If you typically spend £1,500 a year on unleaded, LPG instantly saves £658. LPG also prolongs engine life and results in a cleaner, quieter engine.

If you want to buy a brand new LPG vehicle there is a Ford-approved conversion for £1,595 plus VAT. Vauxhall is poised to launch dual-fuel versions of its Vectra and Omega 2.0 litre models at a projected £2,000 premium. However, the most common way to acquire an LPG-powered vehicle is to have an existing car converted.

According to Alan Cole, senior edi-

tor at Glass's Guide: "Developing an LPG infrastructure is the first hurdle to be overcome before LPG cars become a viable alternative in the UK, and this is why the manufacturers' most recent offerings to this emerging market concentrate on dual-fuel examples. There is no doubt that the current lack of a viable gas refuelling infrastructure is slowing the take-up ... Massive investment is needed from fuel suppliers."

It is possible to rent a tank. Calor can put a 2000-litre tank in your drive for £72 a quarter. Bulk supplies of LPG would then be around 20p per litre plus VAT. If you have gas pumped into your home for heat or cooking, there is no reason why you should not have a refuelling facility for your car.

That is something for the future. So even if Mr Prescott can't handle solar power, he must be relieved that gas powering now has a whole new meaning.

Equipment and installation: Taylor Motors (01733 553031); Marine Eco Power (01590 688644). **Gas and dispensing equipment:** Calor (0800 992200); Flogas (01530 230352)

MY WORST CAR: TRISTRAM PAYNE'S FORD FIESTA XR2



Somehow I found myself as the not-very-proud owner of a Ford Fiesta XR2, bought for the bargain price of £2,500.

To me it looked immaculate, finished in a distinctive metallic blue, and I fell for it hook, line and sinker. I didn't even bother to take it for a test drive, which was a big mistake.

As soon as I got into the XR2 I knew I'd made a terrible mistake – and just a few miles later it ran out of petrol on the motorway. That bad omen signalled that a whole load of problems were heading my way.

The exhaust fell off, the water pump went, and a load of other niggling failures got my back up. And its unreliability wasn't my major gripe. It was mainly that a Fiesta XR2 had no real character, or soul.

As a result I really never enjoyed driving it, and I slowly realised that it had no real power. I would accelerate and wait for something, anything, to happen. The handling was truly awful; you had to persuade it to go around corners, and I always felt as though it might fall off.

Worst of all, it was far too "boy racer", and that was not the image I was trying to project. I don't know why I didn't realise it at the time.

The one redeeming feature was the exhaust note, but that was only because I replaced the

Tristram Payne is co-presenter of Channel 5's 'The Car Show', a new series of which begins in June. He was speaking to James Ruppert.

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Country life calls, but can you bear to share your home?

Just about everyone living in a city has played the "what if" game of selling up and moving to the country. Rambling old rectories, farmhouses in acres of land, mills in isolated rural bliss... it can be afforded if the house really sells for that much.

But, unless urban life is swapped for commuter life, getting away altogether usually means, at the very least, a drop in income, and the "what ifs" are not just about where to live - but how.

None of these considerations will deter anyone determined to turn idle day-dreaming into reality, and country estate agents are more than familiar with people who have set their hearts on a change of lifestyle.

Redundancy packages, part-time working and home-based offices have all made it an

easier proposition, but even the best financial advice can fall short of the expenses incurred in doing up old and neglected buildings - however glorious their potential.

Extra injections of cash become a necessity, and money-making schemes have to appear on the agenda. So what could be better than making the house work for itself in the time-honoured way with bed and

breakfast? Once the territory of the retired, it is now being invaded by people who are more likely to have discussed B&Bs with their stockbroker than with the tourist board.

They know enough of the country hotel market to realise the appeal of old buildings with stylish rooms. They also know that B&B no longer means a semi on the seafront with net curtains and a landlady who bans

guests from returning until six in the evening.

Taking in guests was the last thing Judy Bryant had on her mind when she moved to Devon from Hertfordshire. Her husband swapped his architectural practice for a 17th century cottage in a hamlet near Totnes.

"It needed a great deal of work.

We extended the cottage and

had to make the garden from scratch. We stood back and

looked at the house to decide if it would work as a B&B. We put plumbing in all the bedrooms, and it helps that we have our own sit, so that we are not always tripping over guests."

Planning consent was not necessary as Black Ness Cottage does not take more than six guests. It is an idyllic spot on the Dart Valley trail and picks up holideymakers who want

peace and to be within striking distance of busy Dartmouth.

"We were pretty sure that it would appeal to certain people, and the money we earn has meant that we can afford to stay here. It is an integral part of our budget. But the rewards are far more than financial," says Judy.

"And the guests add another dimension. It is pretty isolated down here."

At Marchand Petit estate agents in Kingsbridge, Devon, they know the romance of life in the country can dwindle fast. Perhaps income dries up and refurbishment expenses cannot be met, or it may be that the whole project becomes wearisome. Families who fondly imagine that isolation is as much fun in the winter as the summer learn a hard lesson.

The firm has been dealing with a not untypical case of a Home Counties couple who sold their house for a good price and bought an old farm with plans to develop cottages on the land into a holiday business. However, they found themselves cut off with no bus services and constantly taxiing their children about, and the strain became too much for the marriage.

The price of property is a temptation. A detached stone house in seven acres with a self-contained wing near Kingsbridge is for sale at £310,000 through Stags in Exeter. A seven-bedroom country guest house in wooded grounds with extra holiday accommodation near Okehampton is on the market for £350,000, while a barnhouse near Barnstaple with a cottage and outbuilding in 19 acres had an asking price of just over £300,000.

Nicola Checkley, of Stags,

says that there has been growing interest from people in their forties for this kind of property. But you can't ensure a regular income from just any house in a lovely part of the country. When Jeannie Allnutt decided to use her redundancy money as a journalist to set up a B&B business she was saved from a terrible mistake by the local tourist board.

"We had found a perfect house in West Devon but were advised that it was too remote to pick up any passing trade. We had always wanted to restore an



Devon-sent: Judy Bryant with guests Caroline Wood (left) and Anne Shaxon at Black Ness Cottage, which she has made a successful B&B. Photograph: Susannah Binney/Apex

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Source: NRS (Jan '97-June '98)

If spring cleaning means trudging up to the loft to store your winter clothes, you can do yourself an enormous favour by having a good gander while you are up there.

Should your insulation be the loose-fill variety, note whether boxes or other heavy objects have been stacked on top. "The insulation works by trapping air. If the fill is compacted, there is less room for this to occur," says Malcolm Hollis, a chartered surveyor.

One-inch-high insulation that started out in life a healthy 4in tall is inefficient and wasteful. Such loose fill can also scatter, and cover electric wiring. Mr Hollis cautions that power cables should be on top of the joist, not surrounded by polystyrene insulation, which degrades the plastic wire insulation, causing the plastic to become brittle". The result is unsafe, and degraded wires may require professional replacement.

If you are replacing or renewing fibre or mineral blanket insulation, allow extra length for the water tank. "My loft is lagged in the eyeballs," says Nick Doak, press officer with Lloyds of London. "In most lofts, the insulating material is unrolled to stop at the edge of the water tank. We extended ours over the top of the tank so it traps and holds heat beneath it."

Treat yourself to a thorough examination of the water tank and pipes. Quite a few of them are begging to burst, waiting only for a sufficiently cold winter. Many a water tank is left to feed for itself,

Early summer is a good time to check the loft insulation and buy your water tank a new jacket, suggests Robert Liebman - and to renew your respect for the inherent viciousness of ladders

either lacking a cover completely or making do with plastic sheeting or makeshift pieces of old tarpaulin draped over the top.

Most tanks are a standard size and still carry labels providing their vital statistics. Off-the-peg covers are cheap and readily available. Matching jackets are also on the market.

Pay little attention to the photo on the packaging, which invariably portrays a water tank dressed to kill, adorned in a snug, perfectly fitting down overcoat. One great, if lesser known, British ritual involves trying to get the jacket to fit as closely over the water tank as in the photo. It never does, but a coat quite completely insulated water tank is infinitely preferable to one that is inadequately covered or uncovered. And don't overlook the smaller central-heating water tank, which requires similar attention.

At the other end of the water tank, the boiler itself needs "no special seasonal treatment", according to a spokesperson for Corgi - the Council for Registered Gas Installers. "The most important thing is to have gas appliances checked annually, and it is inherently dangerous.

Richard Evans, assistant director at Aon insurance brokers, recommends contacting your insurer before erecting

scaffolding or contemplating any other "material fact". Using a gas-fired torch to burn off accumulated grunge on floorboards constitutes a material fact.

"The standard cleaning job for us is spring cleaning for typical home owners," says Julian Villasante, owner of Maison Maids, a domestic cleaning agency in Thames Ditton, Surrey. "A real pukka cleaning job includes rubbing the walls down, shampooing carpets and cleaning skirting boards, picture rails and hard-to-reach places, such as behind the loo pipes. Many customers don't want all of that done."

Many people certainly don't want to pay for cleaning work that they deem to be inessential. Indeed, I know one home owner who doesn't even begin contemplating the duster until his dust has turned to tumbleweed.

However, economies can be false even in seemingly ordinary house-cleaning. "If grouting in the bathroom isn't cleaned regularly, you reach a point where it can't be cleaned and you have to replace it, so it is more costly in the long run," says Mr Villasante.

And what about his own water tank? "It's well lagged. Years ago, I had a relative whose tank burst, and I saw how disastrous that was. It's the first thing we did when we bought our property nearly 10 years ago," he says.

Maison Maids: 0181 398 4300; Corgi: 01256 372200; Aon: 0171 705 7444; Malcolm Hollis: 07000 127000.

Have some 'sarf respect'

London house hunters can pick up a bargain, if they're willing to head into Del Boy territory. By Fiona Brandhorst

When your salary won't buy you a piece of London in one of its trendy "villages", it's time to take a look at cheaper and, let's face it, less appealing parts of town. Forget the Tube, noodle bars and stand-up comedy, start thinking BR, Star Burger and Sky TV at the local pub. It's hard to imagine Plumstead and Peckham doing what Brixton and Clapham have done over the past few years, but there's a hungry bunch of house-hunters out there. Find a quiet backwater with a row of period cottages ripe for renovation, and you have a conservation area in the making.

Take Peckham, the poor relation in currently booming south London. After suffering for years under its Del Boy image, it is now in the throes of a massive regeneration programme. But it is "a property prices and transport links to the City and West End that are bringing new buyers into the area.

Trains from Peckham (zone two) take nine minutes to London Bridge, where the Jubilee Line extension is scheduled to open a station next spring. By changing on to the Tube at London Bridge, it should be possible to be in Canary Wharf or Green Park from Peckham in under 20 minutes.

Lisa Shead, from the estate agents Charterhouse, believes pockets of Peckham will have their day in the not-so-distant future. "People have do... bework and know w... roads they want to buy in." Buyers as well as sellers have been pleasantly surprised by its rise in popularity. Prices start at £80,000 for an unmodernised three-bedroom... Victorian house. Demand is, not surprisingly, outstripping supply, pushing up prices further, especially in the leafy lanes of Nunhead.

Richard Lee, from Acorn estate agents, is seeing a lot of young professionals coming south of the river from north London, where they have been



Green London: Deptford may not be everyone's first choice of address, but more people are turning on to its charms

Photograph: Philip Meech

priced out of the market. "We're also getting the overspill from Clapham, Camberwell and Dulwich." Well-established conservation areas such as Holly Grove and Highshore Road are only minutes from down-town Peckham Rye station. Here, two-up, two-down cottages sell for around £110,000. Girdlers Cottage, a one-bedroom Grade II listed property in Choumert Road, was recently sold through the Halifax for just under £100,000.

"Cheerfully grimy in parts," is how *The New London Property Guide 98/99* describes Deptford, a mere 10cm to the right of Peckham in an A to Z. While Peckham may be world famous for the Trotter family, a tavern in Deptford is the scene of Christopher Marlowe's murder in 1593. More importantly for house-hunters, the area is set to end the 1990s on a high as communications to central London and the Docklands take a leap forward: the East London Line at nearby New Cross has reopened; the extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Deptford Creek opens next

year; and the new Jubilee Line station at London Bridge will be a seven-minute journey from Deptford.

As always in these inner-city enclaves, the most pleasant roads border a piece of green, in this case Deptford Park. Here, three-bedroom Victorian terraces start at around £90,000, but scarcity is increasing their values. You're more likely to find a former local authority property if you're not tempted by one of the new developments down by the river.

Jasper Bark, a writer and performer, lives with his wife Veronica, a PR account director, in an Eighties three-bedroom, ex-council townhouse in the heart of Deptford. They bought it in March for around £80,000. "We wanted to buy an old, ramshackle place, but we realised we didn't have the time, resources or inclination to do it up."

Their love affair with this former naval town started a few years ago, when they were renting nearby. "Its architecture, community feel and great heritage are the reasons why we stayed." Deptford High Street,

on the Greenwich and Deptford history trail, has been face-lifted by regeneration schemes. It's a true mix of cultures, with halal butchers, a pawnbroker and a Chinese acupuncturist sitting alongside a typical London street market twice a week. "It's a cross between Dickens and an Arabian bazaar," adds Mr Bark.

Trundle a few stops further south to Sydenham, and you will have left behind the inner city. While not exactly known for its nightlife, it does have a growing reputation for salvage and second-hand furniture yards.

The zone three train service into Waterloo East (19 minutes) and London Bridge (15 minutes) will also link into the new Jubilee Line. George Proctor, an estate agent, is selling a two-bedroom Victorian cottage in Adastril Road, a short walk to the station, for £95,000. A double-fronted Victorian cottage in the conservation area of Halifax Street, with two bedrooms and a study, is for sale at £110,000.

Leystonstone in east London has seen a huge demand for property in recent months, but

it's not just the Central Line Tube that's making it popular. "That's always been a bonus," says Mike Moore of agents Spicer McColl, "but it's access to the M1, M25, M11 and Stansted and City airports that people want." Prices are between £75,000 and £120,000 for a three-bedroom Victorian house within walking distance of the tube.

But for seriously cheap property, turn to Plumstead.

Tracy Lockett, a graphic designer, was born in Deptford but went east of her roots, a few miles along the Thames to Plumstead Common, where she decided to buy a house earlier this year. The two-bedroom Victorian terrace "with fireplaces and sash windows but needing redecoration" cost £70,000. "I paid £10,000 more for the view over a park," says Ms Lockett.

Kathy Davies, from the agents Mann and Co., believes the Millennium project at Greenwich has put Plumstead on the map. "People who can't afford Greenwich are coming down the river to us." Three-

bedroom period houses on the borders of Plumstead Common, a 15-minute walk from the station, will cost a maximum of £100,000 and start at around £75,000. Going by these figures, Ms Lockett has made a good investment. If convenience rather than a view is a priority, a two-bedroom double-fronted Victorian house minutes from Plumstead station (zone four) is on the market with Mann and Co. for just £57,995.

Carpetbaggers of the property world need to study their A to Zs and go walkabout, preferably on a sunny day - dingy backwaters need to be seen in the best light. If you can get there before the estate agents start moving in, you'll have all the time in the world to watch your investment grow.

The New London Property Guide 98/99 is published by Mitchell Beazley (0171-581 9393). Agents: Charterhouse, 0171-252 9444; Acorn, 0171-771 6777; Halifax, 0181-299 3711; George Proctor 0181-778 9699; Spicer McColl, 0181-558 4021; Mann & Co, 0181-854 1181.

Up, up and away to the high life

It's true that we are all in the gutter, yet some of us are looking at the stars. But for some the stars are definitely much closer. The vogue for apartment life has a big hold on British cities and with industrial buildings, schools and stations rapidly undergoing transformation into living spaces, the gutter is looking quite lonely these days. So why is living at altitude alluring?

Dieter Ralph fell in love with his Barbican flat at first sight despite the fact that he and partner Stephen Baldwin were looking for a suburban house with a garden at the time.

Their 29th floor flat in the heart of the city is surely as far away from suburbia as it is possible to get, yet its bucolic atmosphere appeals to Dieter. "It's a unique place to live, like living in a village community."

Does the hustle and bustle of city life ever intrude? "It's so quiet, particularly at weekends. On Fridays there's a queue coming out of the car park as people leave for their weekend retreats," says Dieter, who is surprised by the number of families he meets in the lift.

The high-flying home has other perks in addition to wonderful light and views. "Residents automatically become members of the Barbican association, with concessions to cinema and theatre tickets and there's even a good restaurant," says Dieter, who has adjusted to life in the clouds although friends can be nervous: "They come round and say they can't bear to stand by the window, but after 10 minutes they eventually venture outside."

High-rise apartment dwelling is taking a new hold in Britain. Aside from great light and views, there are other perks.

By Ginetta Vedrickas

Balconies line the flat's entire length, giving Dieter a chance to indulge his love of gardening, although it is a test seeing which plants survive the wind. The elements are keenly felt inside the flat too: "The block sways, making the walls creak and the lamps swing."

Dieter thinks they'll stay in the flat for a while longer but has his heart set on a traditional garden for the future: "We've an outside table but the wind is restrictive and opportunities for candlelit dinners are one in a million."

Pursuit of romance may not be the only incentive for moving, as yearly service charges increase from £4,000 to £7,000 within the next two years.

The Barbican flats were built in the 1970s. Originally a council estate, most of the flats are privately owned, with a few lower-level flats remaining in local authority ownership. Dieter and Stephen's flat reflects their love of modernism and their environment is suitably chic, proving that tower blocks and concrete is once again fashionable and Victorian currently has the kudos of stone cladding.

Reading the blurb for apartment developments sprouting in every nook and cranny throughout the capital is enough to rouse the most dormant buyer. These are not mere homes

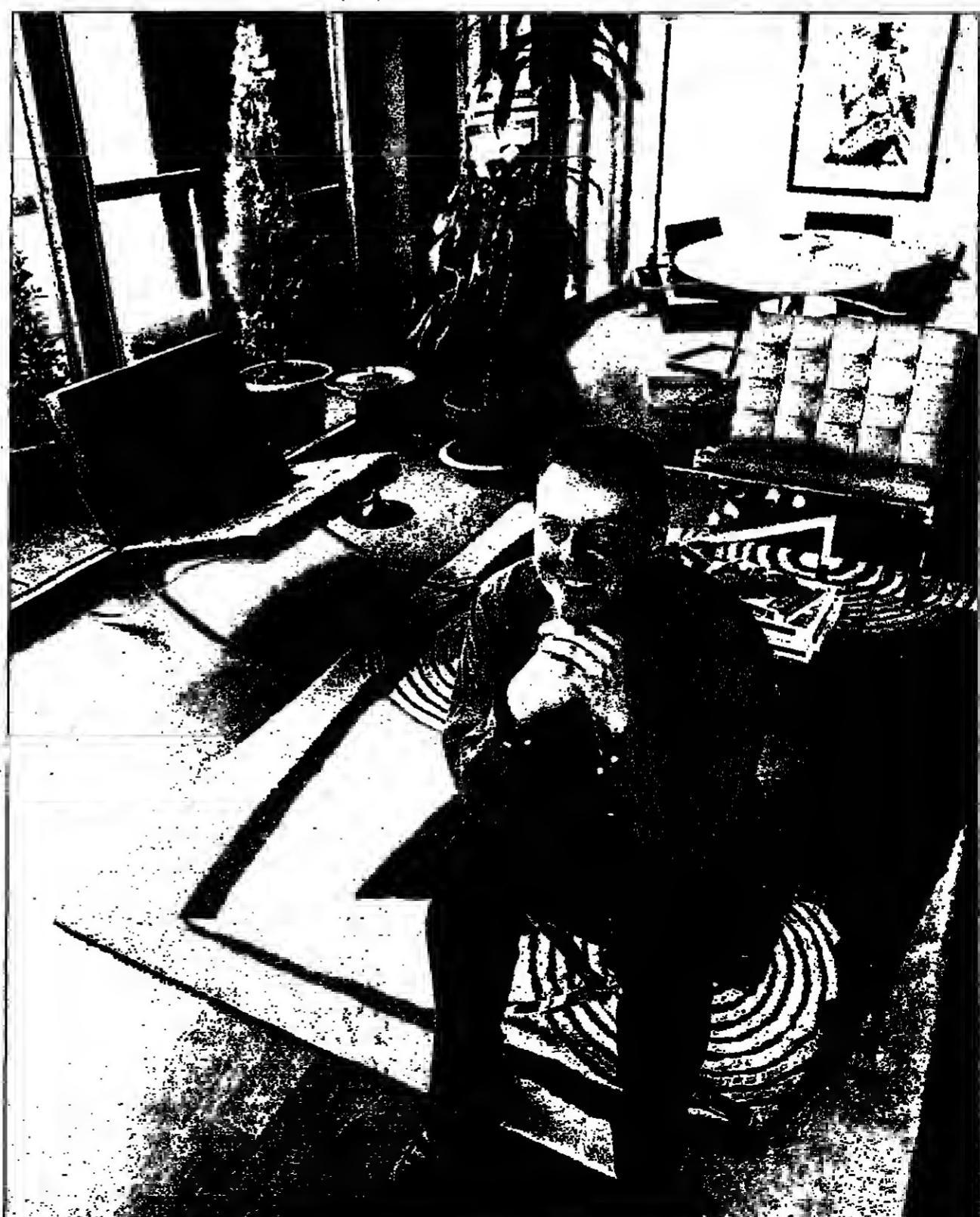
they are no extras. Was John tempted to choose a development with more amenities? "I didn't want portage because, apart from the cost, it would feel like living in a hotel. I belong to a health club so I don't need those facilities," he adds.

Some developments offer perks to those able to exchange quickly. At Metro Central in Elephant & Castle, London, fast-movers can choose from a range of extras which include free cable TV for three years or no service charges for a year.

Apartments are ideal for those with lives too hectic to include DIY. John's flat was fully finished, including tiles and carpeting, so he has had little to do apart from adding those essential accoutrements for the discerning single: dimmer switches.

High-fliers with aspirations for a penthouse, but dependant on a mortgage, should check lender policy. Many building societies impose restrictions and will not consider homes above a certain level. The Woolwich's policy is not to lead on flats above the seventh floor. "It's a grey area and we look at each property individually to assess its future saleability," says a spokesperson.

Living in the heart of the city brings easy access to work and entertainment but not everyone discovers village-like communities. John Tempest finds his location, down the road from the Imperial War Museum, handy for sightseeing when relatives come to stay, but has never met or even seen any neighbours. Perhaps it is not just the gutter which feels lonely.



Life in the clouds: Dieter Ralph fell in love with his 29th floor Barbican flat



PENNY JACKSON

A smart move in London

There are few addresses in the world with the kudos of Eaton Square, SW1. In a survey last year, leading London estate agents voted it the top location for houses and flats. In the smartest square in the smartest part of London many of the owners are too grand to even want their presence mentioned, and they don't move that often.

But now there is a chance to buy not only a new apartment, but one that takes the letter-head of No.1 Eaton Square. Four of the Grade II houses have been taken apart and rebuilt as 13 apartments by Grosvenor Estate Holdings. The Regency facade is of course untouched. So far the main interest is coming from the UK and from Americans already living in London. Apartments start at £1.25m up to £3.25m, while those on 20-year leases are in the region of £500,000. WA Ellis and George Trollope are the selling agents.

A good address in London comes pretty high in the list of priorities for those coming to work in the capital from abroad. It is understandable why they should want to be in South Kensington rather than Stockwell, but if greedy landlords are overpricing their property - as Jacqueline Ironside, a letting agent suggests - then perhaps foreign tenants should take a less conservative view of where they live.

She says that a compromise has to be reached with the landlords in the end, since commuting is "too squalid, too expensive and too time-consuming to be a sensible option".

Since most London workers have to put up with commuter life to some degree, what better way for foreigners to get to know the real city than travelling on the Northern Line every day? Are they so timid that they cannot tell the central London landlords where to go and discover the pleasures of unfashionable London for themselves? Few people who have found themselves living in odd quarters of Paris or newly gentrifying parts of Madrid have any regrets.

The greatest problem facing estate agents is not having enough to sell. For the past year at least they have been urging tentative vendors to get into the market before it is too late. Sooner rather than later is the cry. Trouble is, unless you are buying as well, all those people who waited to sell have done rather well.

Saville Research, for instance, sees more growth in the South East, about 10 per cent next year. Owners with a good property in, say, Cambridge who were rushed into selling early last year might have lost out on as much as 25 per cent. Bidwells now have five buyers bidding for a Cambridge rectory well above the £700,000 asking price. They have 50 or 60 others waiting in the wings, so what could similar vendors expect in six months or more?

From pot pourri to pot roast

A taste of ... lavender from Norfolk, by Nikki Spencer

Lavender may be strongly associated with scenting clothes, but in fact it has also been used in cooking for hundreds of years – and is currently undergoing something of a revival. More and more chefs are using the pungent flower to flavour fish, lamb, sorbet and other foods, and this summer the New Covent Garden Soup Company is producing Potato, Leek and Lavender Soup for sale in grocery shops and supermarkets all over the country.

East Anglia is particularly suited to growing lavender because of its dry, light and sandy soil, according to Henry Head, managing director of the UK's largest commercial grower, Norfolk Lavender – although after the heavy rain last month he says that now he's not so sure. Dry weather from now until the end of July is the key to a good harvest. "I'd be very happy not to see another drop of rain," he says.

The family firm started growing lavender back in 1932, extracting oil for use in perfumery and drying flowers for pot pourri and



Purple haze: the tradition of using lavender as a flavouring is being revived

– more recently – for culinary purposes. The tea room at the company's headquarters at Caley Mill in Heacham sells lavender scones, lavender tea and lavender ice-cream, as well as jars of lavender marmalade.

Up on the coast at Wells-next-the-Sea, a passionate advocate of lavender in cooking is Carla Phillips, who runs The Moorings restaurant with her husband Bernard.

"Anything you can use rosemary for is pretty good with lavender, only it has more strength and vigour," enthuses Carla. She puts dried lavender (or fresh, when it's available) into salt water to flavour steamed fish, and uses it as a marinade with lemon and garlic on loin of lamb. She also makes an aromatic oil with lavender, steeping a sprig in oil with garlic and salt and pepper, to use a few weeks later on salads, or with mashed potato.

However, Carla warns against getting carried away with the idea of lavender as an ingredient. "Lavender is quite powerful and I

believe it works best when it is used subtly in savoury recipes. I think a sweet lavender scone, for example, would be foul."

Lavender trails

• Norfolk Lavender, Caley Mill, Heacham (01485 570384) is open to the public, admission free, daily except Christmas Day. From mid-June to August you can see more than 100 acres of lavender in bloom by joining minibus tours of the fields (cost £3.95). From mid-July you can also see the distilling process, whereby the lavender is made into oil. As well as the tea rooms, the 19th-century mill has a garden centre and a shop that sells dried lavender flowers for cooking. The company also runs a mail-order service (01507 466466).

• The Moorings, 6 Freeman Street, Wells-next-the-Sea (01328 710949) is open from Thursday to Monday. Owner and chef Carla Phillips has written a book in conjunction with Norfolk Lavender entitled *Herbs from a Norfolk Kitchen* – available for £3 plus 85p p&p from Norfolk Lavender.

Kitchen – available for £3 plus 85p p&p from Norfolk Lavender.

• Two other Norfolk restaurants that use lavender regularly are Congham Hall Hotel, Grimston, Kings Lynn (01485 600250), where the owner, Christine Forecast, grows more than 30 different varieties of lavender in her herb garden (open to the public daily 2pm-4pm, free); and Rococo, 11 Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn (01533 771483) where lavender and gin ice-cream is usually on the menu.

• The New Covent Garden Soup Company's Potato, Leek and Lavender Soup, made with fresh lavender flowers, will be available from 27 July to 9 August, price £1.49 for a carton.

Nectar of the Aztecs: in our article on chocolate, published on 4 April, we mentioned the Musée du Cacao et du Chocolat. Please note that the exhibition building – at 13 Grand Place, B 1000 Brussels – is currently undergoing refurbishment and is not open to the public until 1 July.

Flowers good enough to eat

The stuff of ... cakes. Sally Staples discovers the delicate art of sugar craft

There is a shop that will solve the dilemma of whether to buy a wedding cake or learn to make one. Cortell and Barratt, specialists in the delicate art of sugar craft, offer both custom-made cakes and classes in how to decorate them yourself.

Jane Whichello and her husband Rozi began their business 14 years ago. On display in a conservatory behind the shop – where classes are held – is a cabinet containing examples of sugar flowers that might pass muster if exhibited at Kew Gardens: lilies, roses, gardenias, gladioli, orchids, peonies. Every detail is there, from yellow-gold stamens at the centre of each flower, to the delicate twigs and leaves. The demand is growing for sugar flowers, and if you have a mind to try them yourself, Jane says she can teach a pupil in a single day.

In the shop, every cake-perfecting gadget is available to buy. The Whichellos are the sole importers to the UK of spe-



Photograph: John Lawrence

GAMES

CROSSWORD PUZZLERS OUT FOR A DUCK: DON MANLEY EXPLAINS HIMSELF

Some of you reading this article will have been guided across from the crossword puzzle in this week's *Ism*. Some, I have no doubt, will be angry, some sad, and some perhaps even amused. Others may have hit this piece purely by chance.

The fact is that I have achieved – if "achieved" is the right word – something quite unusual, and have been invited by my long-suffering crossword editor, Louise Levene, to give an account of myself. In puzzle 149, published on 18 April in *Ism*, I invited solvers to fill in some squares with clashing letters "to accord with the shape they make", adding that "a final mark should be added at an appropriate intersection of two grid lines". The shape (see *Ism*) looked like a K knocked over. I assumed that readers would interpret it as a π (pi) and work out (perhaps following the hint in the puzzle's title "More or Less") the numerical differences between the clashing letters.

Thus, at the bottom of the pi the second 1 of IMAGINE in 26 down is three away from the second L of LILY at 41 across, so "3" is entered. Progressing up the leg of the pi, we get 3141, then 592... along the top and 7932 down the bottom leg. When you add the decimal point after the opening

digit, you get 3.141592... the value of π . Clever stuff! Obviously too clever for all eight or nine hundred entrants.

Looking back, I can see that the shape of the pi is a bit inaccurate, and perhaps in my day job as a maths editor I am used to seeing too many hand-written approximations to this transcendental wonder. But surely the shape wasn't that bad, and a few mathematicians would have seen what I was driving at? Alas, I miscalculated.

There has long been a tradition of providing impossible or near-impossible crosswords. Two *Listener* puzzles spring to mind: in one crossword by "Afri" in the Thirties or Forties, the publication expressed regret that none of its readers connected "Lombardy" and "Man of Words" with *The Cardinal's Snuff Box* at 28 across – a connection which some of us still fail to make; and about 20 years ago there was a puzzle entitled "Lip Service" by Leon, which involved playing a game of solitaire and spelling out the inscription on the Blarney Stone.

Afri was a master working out the rules of a new game; Leon was probably too clever for his own good. So where does that place Duck? I'm in the

Leon camp, though I suspect Leon knew what he was doing. I guess that, despite over 30 years of setting, I didn't. I am as dumbfounded by the zero correct entries as the hapless solvers who failed to recognise the malformed mathematical symbol. But my feelings, to be honest, are mixed: I'm tempted to be excited at having fooled everyone, but reckon I should feel guilty at having spoiled everyone's fun.

Only two more things need to be said. One is that we need to explore the new and strange in crosswords to keep the game alive; the other is that no one should ever set out deliberately to produce a puzzle that will stump all the solvers. On that charge I plead innocent, so my apology to *Ism* enthusiasts has some qualification. For most of the time, the setter must expect to be a gracious loser in a battle of wits in a contest that has a fair set of rules and conventions. That is how the battle is normally conducted in the *Ism* puzzle, and indeed all the puzzles in *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*.

Don Manley contributes as 'Duck' to *Ism*. His less-than-impossible puzzles appear weekly in the *Independent on Sunday*, in the guise of Quixote.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Lord Grade, 91, film maker, producer, the *Grade Company*

We used to have races at school. I was a good, fast runner, but I never made it a part of my career. At the time, I had no idea what I was going to do, and certainly didn't know that I'd finish up in the entertainment industry.

If I could play anything, I would have liked to be a good tennis player. I had a house with a tennis court one time, but I wasn't any good, so I knew that it wasn't a natural thing for me. When you play games, you have to feel at ease with them.

I've tried golf, but unfortunately I just could not hit the ball, so I thought, why drive myself crazy? There's no point in anyone trying to play a game that they don't take to naturally.

When I was 18 years old I discovered the sport of dancing, and became an exceptional Charleston dancer. To begin with, I was a ballroom dancer. I wasn't very good, and it was hard to get a partner. But

who I started to Charleston, the girls were lining up to dance with me.

I'd learned to do intricate steps, because my father – as you probably know – was born in Russia. He was a very good Cossack dancer, and who I became a dancing act – which I was for eight years before I became an agent – I incorporated a lot of those steps that they do as Cossack dances into my routines.

I am still the world Charleston champion. I won the competition at the Royal Albert Hall on 15 December 1926 and I learned only recently that one of the judges was Fred Astaire. If I'd known he was watching, I'd probably have failed with nerves.

Grade Productions produced 'On Golden Pond' and 'Sophie's Choice'. Their latest film, 'Something to Believe In', was released in the UK yesterday by Warner Bros. Marla Pipillo and William McNamara star with Tom Conti, Maria Schneider and Ian Bannen.

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

Of all the many changes that have taken place in the chess world over the past three decades – the schism in the world championship, the bad influence of rapid play events on the general quality of play, the pernicious effects of computer analysis, and the introduction of the ludicrous Bobby Fischer Chess Clock among them – the one I find most depressing is the extinction of cheap chess sets made of French boxwood at the hands of an even less expensive plastic variety.

I say this not through any particular aesthetic delight at the tactile qualities of wood or a dislike of plastic itself. It's just the shape of the wooden knight's ears that I miss. The disappearance of the boxwood sets, you see, has deprived me of my one great claim to a place in chess history. For I was the first person ever, as far as I know, to pilot an entire chess set on top of a single rook. And thanks to the despicable new plastic sets, that is an art that has totally died out.

You start with a rook (conventionally a white one, though black would, I suppose, be equally acceptable) placed normally on any square of a chessboard. The crenellations around its battlements provide the notches on which four pawns may be hung in a manner that allows the tops of the pawns to form the base for the next level.

Now comes the clever hit. Take two knights, two bishops and one rook. If you hang the knights' muzzles over the rook's battlements, you will find they stay in place. And they become even more stable if you tuck a bishop in under each of their bellies. (Point the two bishops in opposite directions for general stability.) The entire rook-plus-four-minor-pieces combination may then be balanced upon the four pawns on the original rook. Not only were the boxwood sets perfectly weighted for this to work, but the ears of the knight's pointedly upwards, left a four-point horizontal base for the next level.

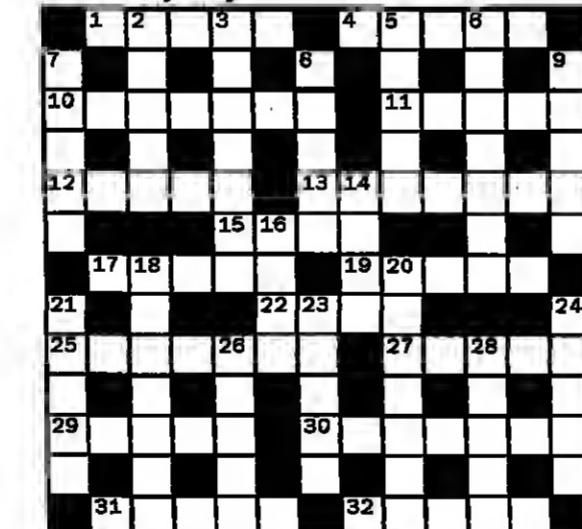
So another rook, two bishop and two knights are disposed of in similar manner, leaving us with two queens, two kings and 12 pawns. It's a little tricky, but you can get rid of two of the pawns between the ears of the knights. Delicately placed, they are light enough not to upset the balance, and their position becomes more stable when the next level is added.

Three pawns may be hung round each queen's head, again forming a level triangular base of pawn-tops for the next storey. At the very top two kings may be suspended by their crosses on those very useful crenellations of the final rook. The last four pawns may be balanced on assorted bishops with one or two even on the topmost rook between the kings.

The execution of this fine pile took me most of my fourth year at Cambridge. Then the sets went out of fashion and my hope for eternal fame vanished with them.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3606 Saturday 9 May



ACROSS

- 1 He-goat (5)
- 4 Broadcasting (2,3)
- 10 Stir (7)
- 11 Inexpensive (5)
- 12 Correct (5)
- 13 Make a list of (7)
- 15 Solemn word (4)
- 17 Convulsive movement (5)
- 19 Call to mind (5)
- 22 Long, bushy hair (4)
- 25 Masculinity (7)
- 27 Heat unit (5)
- 29 Rough hut (5)
- 30 First (7)
- 31 Burglar's tool (5)
- 32 Gemstone (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 5 Wreck, 8 Amending (Recommending), 9 Image, 10 Campaign, 11 Umbra, 14 Spy, 15 Embark, 17 Estate, 18 fm., 20 Alone, 24 Smalpox, 25 Of-fish, 26 Almita, 27 Nerve. DOWN: 1 Watch, 2 Grecus, 3 Ideas, 4 Knight, 6 Rambutan, 7 Cognac, 12 small fly, 13 Mainland, 14 Skit, 15 Yen, 19 Nabuhy, 21 Elder, 22 Spout, 23 Ex-pat.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all; dealer South

North
♦8 6
♥Q 10 5
♦10 7 6 3
♦K 8 6 5

West
♦A 10 9 4
♥9 7 2
♦8 5 2
♦7 4 3

East
♦7 3 2
♥8 6 4 3
♦A 9 4
♦A Q 2

South
♦K Q J 5
♥A K J
♦K Q J
♦J 10 9

Oh dear! I shall have to give up offering well-meant advice and stick strictly to reporting facts. This deal produced a peevish letter from a correspondent.

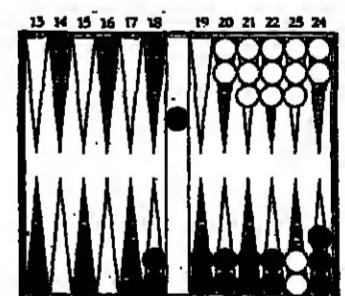
The bidding was simple: South opened Two No-trumps and North raised to game. West led ♦4 against Three No-trumps, obviously following my recent suggestion that the lead of a ten against a no-trump contract implied a strong suit with two higher honours. Dummy followed with the six and East (who had clearly noticed my other recent point, that rather than make an apparently useless attempt with near-garbage in partner's suit, it was more useful to give a count) thoughtfully played the two to suggest a three-card holding.

When ♦6 won, declarer still had two guards in spades and he attacked clubs. Now it was too late for the defenders to get a long card in any suit working and they came to only the four obvious tricks (a spade, a diamond and two clubs).

Thus, the lead of ♦10 defeats the contract when West ducks his partner's next spade return. Yes, East could have done everything that was necessary by covering ♦6 with his seven at trick one after which, again, West ducks the next spade return.

But the real culprit on the hand was declarer! Why? He really should have tried ♦8 from dummy at trick one – a play that could hardly cost and would have provided an unexpected third stopper in spades.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Here's a position that confronted Murray "Quickdouble" Sharp at the Double Fives the other night. Murray, playing Black, had not only doubled early but had also accepted the redouble when all around him in the chouette had very sensibly passed. In his own inimitable style he had turned the game round to reach the position above. Should he redouble to 8?

The position is highly volatile and could change dramatically over the next two rolls. If Murray enters with any 6, White will be all but lost. Conversely, if he stays on the bar and White rolls a 6 then all the pressure will be on Murray. Most people have a natural fear of doubling from the bar against a 5-point board but Quickdouble is not of this ilk, and he redoubled with hardly a moment's thought. His opponent took: Quickdouble rolled 63 and comfortably won the game. The question is: were the double and take correct?

The answer is that this is an excellent benchmark position. Black should double and White should take. If White were any weaker, for example if he had only a 4-point, or if he had a blot exposed on his 6-point, then he should drop.

How do you evaluate this over the board? Black should note that if he rolls a 6, or he stays on the bar and White doesn't roll a 6, he will become a prohibitive favourite, so now is the time to double. White should note that if Black doesn't roll a 6 and White does roll a 6, then he will have a very strong position. As this will happen nearly 25 per cent of the time, this gives him enough chances to take.

The final point to made is that success goes to players who are good at applying pressure. Quickdouble Sharp certainly did that in this position, applying exactly the right pressure at the right time.